MODERN MESSAGES FROM GREAT HYMNS

ROBERT ELMER SMITH

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MODERN MESSAGES FROM GREAT HYMNS

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly!"

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Modern Messages from Great Hymns

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By
ROBERT ELMER SMITH

Introduction by
BISHOP JAMES W. BASHFORD

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TO
COMMON FOLK
IN THIS WORKADAY WORLD
WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN ENRICHED
BY
THESE GREAT HYMNS

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FOREWORD

CHRISTIAN hymns have been scattered through the centuries, like sweet flowers, along the pilgrim's rugged, earthly pathway, exhaling a more fragrant perfume as he draws near to that heavenly city "whose maker and builder is God." It has been estimated that fully half a million hymns have been written in the more than two hundred languages and dialects in which Christianity is preached.

These hymns have been a powerful factor in supporting and spreading the doctrines of the Christian Church. In the expression of gospel truth, in sublimity of diction, in wholesome inspiration, in brilliancy of imagery, in grandeur of conception they are unsurpassed in all poetic literature. They have led the sinful to God; have brought rest to the weary, have given strength to the faint, have inspired the discouraged with new hope, have comforted the sorrowing, have sweetened the trials of the living, have calmed the fears of the dying. Like Jacob's ladder, they reach from earth to heaven, from time to eternity.

The hymn messages contained in this volume are based upon some of the greatest as well as the best loved hymns of the modern church. The author has sought to interpret the doctrines, lessons, and spirit of these hymns which are loved by multitudes of Christian people throughout the civilized world.

It has been the constant aim in these messages to make them modern, practical, pointed, and thoroughly evangelical. They come directly from the brain, heart, and lips of the living preacher. They are addressed to the common people—to folk who, in this workaday world, are enjoying life's blessings, patiently bearing the world's burdens, passing through common trials, resisting alluring temptations, meeting stern adversities, and enduring crushing sorrows.

They are sent forth with the earnest hope and prayer that they may bring some crumbs of cheer, peace, and comfort to many a troubled heart.

ROBERT ELMER SMITH.

Portland, Oregon, 1916.

INTRODUCTION

MODERN MESSAGES FROM GREAT HYMNS treats with unusual insight twelve of the greatest hymns of the ages. Professor Francis H. Smith, whose literary culture and recognized scholarship led to his selection as Cole Lecturer in 1906, heard the author deliver several of these messages and read the others in manuscript. He writes: "The author unfolds the meaning of these great hymns—what was doubtless in the hymn writer's heart and mind when he wrote them. He has had in view, not so much the theologian in his study, as the man in the pew or in the shop, and the humble woman in the home, and has brought these terse and able messages from the great hymns to stir and comfort them. By a simple and clear style, a copious store of illustration, and, above all, a vision of the Master's face in every Message, he causes these jewels of the Church catholic to shine with a new luster."

Professor Smith's appreciation led me to review these Hymn Messages. The author's

clear, simple and straightforward style, and his power to penetrate at once to the heart of the subject, his abundant illustrations, and his genius for helpfulness will make these Messages a blessing to all who read them. Moreover, they will furnish much striking illustrative matter for the use of pastors, Sunday school superintendents, and leaders of religious services. Their wide use by the church will enable multitudes to sing with the heart because singing with the understanding also.

The Hymn Message on "Saved by Grace," perhaps the most precious hymn written by Fanny Crosby, was read to the blind poet by a friend of the author. As she listened to the Message her face lighted up and she exclaimed: "Mr. Smith has expressed the very thoughts I had in mind, and I am glad I have a kindred spirit. You can read my inmost thoughts in his unfolding of my hymn. There is certainly a strange connection between his thought and mine. I have not words to express my appreciation of his work, and I am sure that his Messages will lead many wanderers into the fold of the Good Shepherd."

I believe that Sarah Adams would say the

same of Mr. Smith's interpretation of "Nearer, My God, to Thee," Perronet of "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!" Toplady of "Rock of Ages," Faber of "Faith of Our Fathers!" and Charles Wesley of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." What more can one say for an interpreter of these great hymns than Fanny Crosby has written? Indeed, what more need be said?

I need only add to the multitudes who I think will unite with me in reading these Messages what the little girl said when she was invited to three Sunday school picnics in one week—"So many good times in our town, and we are in them all."

JAMES W. BASHFORD.

CHAPTER I

JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL

JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
  Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
  While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
  Till the storm of life be past;
Safe into the haven guide,
  O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none;
  Hangs my helpless soul on thee:
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
  Still support and comfort me:
All my trust on thee is stayed,
  All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
  With the shadow of thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
  More than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
  Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
  I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am,
  Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
  Grace to cover all my sin:
Let the healing streams abound;
  Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
  Freely let me take of thee:
Spring thou up within my heart,
  Rise to all eternity.

—*Charles Wesley.*

CHAPTER I

JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL

THIS hymn is generally regarded as Charles Wesley's masterpiece. If this were the only hymn he ever wrote, and the only service he ever rendered humanity, it is sufficient to immortalize his name. In the number and in the high average excellence of his hymns Wesley easily stands first among English hymnologists. The spiritual beauty and helpfulness of his hymns lies in the fact that he did not write hymns as a mere task, but he wrote them as an expression of his innermost thoughts and feelings. He wrote his hymns in all sorts of places and under all sorts of conditions. Frequently he would write them on cards or scraps of paper as he rode horseback or in a carriage or on the deck of a vessel. Sometimes he would hasten home and, seizing a pen, would write before the inspiration which he felt had departed.

While a number of his hymns are exceptionally beautiful both in thought and diction,

"Jesus, Lover of My Soul," ranks preeminent among them all. Dr. George Duffield, author of "Stand up, Stand up for Jesus," in his old age paid this tribute to Wesley's great hymn: "One of the most blessed days of my life was when I found, after my harp had long hung on the willows, that I could sing again; that a new song was put in my mouth; and when, ere ever I was aware, I was singing, 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul.' If there is anything in Christian experience of joy and sorrow, of affliction and prosperity, of life and death, that hymn is the hymn of the ages!"

This hymn was loved by Dr. Lyman Beecher above all others. The same was true of his illustrious son, Henry Ward Beecher, who declared: "I would rather have written that hymn of Wesley's than to have the fame of all the kings that ever sat on the earth. It is more glorious. It has more power in it. I would rather be the author of that hymn than to hold the wealth of the richest man in New York. They will grow old and die, but that hymn will go on singing until the last trump brings forth the angel band; and then, I think it will mount up on some lip to the very presence of God."

This hymn has led many to recognize Christ

as the Saviour—yea, as the One altogether lovely. This hymn has been a potent inspiration to multitudes hard pressed by the burdens of life. This hymn has proved a heavenly panacea to countless numbers struggling amid the woes of life. This hymn has been the soft pillow where our loved ones have sweetly rested as earth grew dim and the light of heaven broke upon them.

What can we, who live in this present age, learn from this great hymn? What is the message which it brings to the heart of folks living in a world of sin, burden-bearing, sorrow, and death?

First of all, this hymn goes straight to the very heart of the Christian religion and points to Christ as the Saviour of men. Right in the center of the first verse comes the yearning, the passionate cry, "Hide me, O my Saviour, hide." Here we have the very quintessence of the gospel of Jesus. Even before the Christ was born of a woman the angel commanded, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." The chief reason why this hymn is so popular, why it is loved by the multitudes, is because it has so much of Christ in it. The man whose life has been darkened and cursed by sin does

not want good advice, a good example, a better environment, new resolutions, a gradual ethical evolution within. He wants a Saviour. He wants a Christ who is able to redeem him and help him to be a victor over sin. He wants to hide amid life's storms in the heart that was wounded for his transgressions.

There is a touching story connected with the origin of this hymn. Mr. Wesley was standing one day by an open window looking out over the beautiful landscape. Presently he saw a little bird approaching pursued by a hawk. The poor, frightened bird, seeing the open window, flew in and sought refuge in Mr. Wesley's bosom. With fluttering heart and quivering wing it nestled close to the poet and escaped a cruel death. At that particular time Mr. Wesley was passing through severe trials and was feeling the need of a refuge in just as real a sense as the little bird which flew to his bosom for safety. So he took up his pen and wrote,

> Jesus, Lover of my soul,
> Let me to thy bosom fly.

The picture is a beautiful one and highly suggestive. Man in this world is pursued by many enemies. Appetite, pride, lust, false

ambition, mammonism are only a few of the many enemies which pursue him. Moreover, the pursuit is a relentless one. Paul was right when he said, "We wrestle . . . against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Man is indeed confronted by many spiritual enemies; he wrestles with them, he is pursued by them. But as the poor, pursued bird found salvation in the bosom of Wesley, so man, pursued by the enemies of his soul, may flee to the bosom of the Christ and find forgiveness and safety. As the penitent heart nestles close to the great, compassionate heart of the Christ he may hear him say, "Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace and sin no more."

My door bell rang before five o'clock one morning and I was awakened out of a sound sleep. I found a man at the door who was an entire stranger to me. I invited him into the parlor. He confessed that he had been living a sinful life and that he had broken some hearts by his wrongdoings. Conscience had been lashing him severely. He felt very keenly the force of the prophetic message: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and

dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." He confessed that he was in need of help, that he earnestly desired help. He did not ask for temporal aid. He did not need it, as he had a good position. The enemies of his soul had pursued him and taken him captive. A troubled heart and conscience drove him to a preacher's house before the dawn of day. He wanted me to direct him. I might have told him to turn over a new leaf, to forget the past, to stop wrongdoing, to try to do right, to love the beautiful, not to believe there was anything called "sin" in the world, to be saved "by character." There are many in these modern days who would have thus advised him. But following such advice would not make this man free and give him a pure heart and a clear conscience. So I directed him to flee straight to the arms of Jesus, the Saviour. He accepted the direction, fell to his knees, met Christ face to face, pleaded for his forgiveness, and arose and went forth to remedy the wrongs of the past so far as he could.

What man needs primarily is not education, a new environment, new habits, ethical culture, but the saving touch of the personal Christ. Harold Begbie's two books, Twice Born Men

and Souls in Action, constitute a most excellent spiritual tonic for this age and emphasize in a striking manner the truth that the Christ of God is the supreme need of humanity. A sculptor may transform a piece of rough marble into a statue of exquisite loveliness, but it is still cold and lifeless stone. An artist may decorate a tomb with most beautiful colors, but the scene within the tomb is not changed—death still reigns. A leper may clothe himself with a royal vesture, but he is still a leper—every spot remains. So the sinful man may educate himself, may change his environment, may reform his external life without knowing anything about the "power of God unto salvation." The message of the personal Christ to folks of the twentieth century is the same as to those of the first century—"Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Professor Henry Drummond had this conception in mind when he wrote: "Christianity is a fine inoculation, a transfusion of healthy blood into an anæmic or poisoned soul. No fever can attack a perfectly sound body; no fever of unrest can disturb a soul which has breathed the air or learned the ways of Christ."

O Master, it is good to be
Entwined, enrapt, alone with thee;
Till we, too, change from grace to grace,
Gazing on that transfigured face.

Again, amid the trials and stern conflicts of life, this immortal hymn points to Christ as the only Refuge of the soul. How sweet, how tender, how blessed, how significant the words!—

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee.

There were many rooms in the ark, but there was only one door. So there is only one door in the ark of our salvation and that door is Jesus. He is the only refuge to which the soul may flee for safety amid life's storms. The ancient city of refuge is a beautiful type of Christ. Every provision was made to render the city easy of access. It was not located in a valley, hidden among trees, but on a hill where it might be seen at a distance. The roads leading to it were wide and were kept in excellent condition. Stones were placed at every crossroad, for fear the fugitive should lose his way. The word "refuge" was written on the stones in large letters in order that one might read as he ran. The gates of the city of refuge were open both day and

night to permit the pursued to enter. The people of the city received him and provided him with food and shelter. Like the city of refuge, Christ is easy of access to every troubled soul and provides shelter and comfort for all who flee to him. Along the exposed routes in the Alps places of shelter have been erected. In these the weary traveler overtaken by storms may find protection and refreshment. Thus the pilgrim on life's journey, when the storms are raging about him, may hang his helpless soul on Christ with a feeling of perfect security. Christ will be to him a shelter, a rest, a refuge, "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

The author of this hymn was once on the Atlantic during a fearful storm. The storm was so terrific that both sailors and passengers alike believed the vessel would be lost. Mr. Wesley in his journal thus refers to this experience: "The storm was at its height. At four o'clock the ship made so much water that the captain, finding it impossible otherwise to save her from sinking, cut down the mizzen-mast. In this dreadful moment, I bless God, I found comfort and hope as the world can neither give nor take away." Can you not see the picture clearly? There stands the man

who wrote this blessed hymn storm-tossed on an apparently sinking vessel. Yet, in that very moment which he characterized as "dreadful" he hung his helpless soul on Christ and found comfort, peace, and hope. Science tells us that underneath all the tumult, all the restlessness of the ocean, there is a vast area of perfectly calm waters—so calm that the smallest shell is not stirred by the turmoil above. This is a symbol of the condition of that man who makes Christ his only refuge amid life's storms. When his frail bark is tempest-tossed on life's sea he hears a voice sweeter than the sweetest music, saying, "Peace, be still," and there is a great calm in his life. Spurgeon heard that voice and exclaimed, "Let me lay my head on the bosom of Jesus, and I fear not the distraction of care and trouble." Gotthold heard that voice and declared, "For my part, my soul is like a hungry and thirsty child, and I need Christ's love and consolation for my refreshment; my soul is like a frightened dove pursued by the hawk, and I need his wounds for a refuge." Dr. Punshon heard that voice and cried out, "Jesus Christ is to me a glorious reality." Dr. R. W. Dale heard that voice and exclaimed, "He lives! He lives! Jesus lives!"

A woman living next door to a saloon lost a sweet child. She was a Christian woman, and in the very midst of her anguish she found comfort by hanging her helpless soul on Christ while he graciously covered her defenseless head with the shadow of His wing. The Saturday night following her loss there were a number of rough, drinking men making merry in the adjoining saloon. These sounds were very discordant and disturbing to this stricken mother who had recently moved into this tenement. So she sat down at the cottage organ, began to play, and as she played, sang,

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly."

As she went on singing the stanzas of this grand old hymn which comforted her so greatly, she prayed that it might prove God's messenger to the men next door. And so it proved. The men departed and the saloon was closed for the night. The next evening the saloon keeper sent two lady members of his family to ask her to play and sing "Jesus, Lover of my soul." She sang it again, and followed with other hymns. But this great hymn of Wesley's was God's shaft of conviction which led to the conversion of the

man next door. The sinful, the burdened, the sorrowful, the disconsolate, the weary have all been wonderfully helped and inspired by this hymn. Why? Because it points them unerringly to man's only source of forgiveness, of comfort, of rest, of inspiration.

I have been told of an aged saint in a town in New England who always went to prayer meeting, and for many, many years in her testimony always repeated a certain passage of Scripture. No matter what the subject under discussion was, she never failed to quote this passage. She quoted it in such a tender and reverent manner that it made a profound impression. This passage breathes through every verse of this hymn. Wesley expressed in poetry what Christ expressed in a few terse words when he said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

What a striking figure of speech Wesley uses when he writes, "Jesus, Lover"! A true lover is affectionate, kind, tender, thoughtful, devoted, faithful. His love is strong as death, pure as the dew, sweet as the rose, deep as the ocean, high as the heavens, and enduring

as eternity. Such, O child of God, is the attitude of Jesus, the Lover of thy soul, toward thee.

Finally, this great hymn teaches us that Christ is all-sufficient, that he perfectly satisfies the longing soul. How deeply the sweet singer touches our hearts as he sings!—

> Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
> More than all in thee I find.

This brings Christ very near to us. We can feel his great heart of love beating against ours. To the Christian heart Christ is not an empty abstraction but a tender, true friend, and elder brother.

Christ's message to us of this twentieth century is: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." What a contrast we have here between those who are drinking at the fountain of Life and those who are drinking at mere worldly fountains! Ask that man who is drinking at the fountain of worldly pleasure if he finds perfect satisfaction. If he is sincere, he will reply in the negative. Every man who drinks at this fountain is compelled to cry out

sooner or later, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Ask that man who is drinking at the fountain of wealth if he is perfectly satisfied. If honest, he will tell you that stocks and bonds, real estate and gold do not satisfy the deepest cravings of the human heart. Ask that man who is drinking at the fountain of fame if he is fully satisfied. If he is frank, he will tell you there is no abiding satisfaction here, and that "the paths of glory lead but to the grave." The poet fitly describes all those who drink at worldly fountains when he wrote:

> Drank every cup of joy,
> Heard every trump of fame;
> Drank early, deeply drank,
> Drank draughts which common millions might have quenched,
> Then died of thirst, because there was no more to drink.

But ask that man who has been living for years in sweet communion with Christ if he is satisfied. Without any hesitation he replies,

> "Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
> More than all in thee I find."

As disciples of the Christ let us praise him for the present satisfaction of the Christian

life. We do not have to wait until we get to heaven to find out that Christ satisfieth the longing soul. He does this here and now. In Lowell's well-known poem, "Sir Launfal," he writes, "We are happy now because God wills it." What a blessed thought! God wills our happiness, our satisfaction. It is sin which robs man of true blessedness and satisfaction. To be happy and contented all sin must be forsaken. The man who throws open his heart's windows to the sunshine of Christ's love will find all his wants supplied by communion with the Master. Do you want forgiveness? He is the mighty Saviour. Do you want light? He is the light of the world. Do you want peace? He is the Prince of Peace. Do you want guidance? He will guide you with his eye. Do you want joy? He promises that his joy shall be with you. Do you want rest? He says, "I will give you rest." Do you want companionship? He says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end."

Well has a noted divine said: "There is no life on earth so happy as the real Christian life. Where there is a thorn there is a whole garland of roses. Where there is one groan there are three doxologies. Where there is one cloud there is a whole season of sunshine."

The thought of God giving his children much of happiness and satisfaction in this present life led the poet to write,

> The hill of Zion yields
> A thousand sacred sweets,
> Before we reach the heav'nly fields,
> Or walk the golden streets.

And, then, how about the close of the Christian's life? Does the Christ satisfy the longing soul as he faces eternity? Yes, he makes the closing hours of this earthly life radiant with his presence and glory. I have witnessed some great triumphs in the death chambers of God's children. I knew a man who did not recognize Jesus as the Lover of his soul until he had reached his fiftieth year. After a happy Christian experience of seven years he went home. I was with him just before he went to his coronation. Lying in that bed his face was transfigured by the grace of Christ. Looking directly at me, he assured me that Christ was very near and dear and then in an exulting spirit, he exclaimed,

> " 'Tis religion that can give
> Sweetest pleasures while we live;
> 'Tis religion can supply
> Solid comfort when we die."

Wesley's matchless hymn has proved a powerful inspiration to many as they have faced death. A Christian drummer boy was badly wounded in a battle in the Civil War. Leaning against a stump, he sang this beautiful hymn until his voice was hushed into silence by the death angel and his soul sped to the bosom of Jesus. A mother clung to a piece of wreckage with her child, and amid the icy waters, with death staring her in the face, sung this immortal song of Jesus's love and care. In Bellevue Hospital in New York an unknown sailor tried to sing this great hymn, but after singing a few lines faintly, the silver cord was broken and he met the divine Pilot face to face. Benjamin Parsons, the English social reformer, fully conscious of the fact that he was dying, sang this soothing hymn just before the spirit took its flight. It was Bishop Simpson's last morning on earth. His wife sat by his bed and repeated,

"Safe into the haven guide.
O receive my soul at last!"

The Bishop, with a triumphant smile on his face, repeated, "O receive my soul at last!" and passed safely into the eternal haven. These are only a few illustrations of the com-

fort, the joy, the peace, the satisfaction which multitudes of people have found in this grand old hymn as they have passed on to their coronation before the great white throne.

Tholuck, the great German divine, loved Christ supremely. One day, standing before his class, he exclaimed: "I have but one passion. It is he! It is he!" This old hymn we have been studying has only one passion. It is Christ! O that the passion which swayed the lives of Tholuck and Wesley might become the great, the supreme, the ruling passion of our lives! As we contemplate the Christ life with all of its self-sacrifice and marvelous ministrations, may we joyously exclaim: "I have but one passion. It is he! It is he!" As we contemplate life's stern conflict and our sacred duties to our brother man, may the lofty spirit of a righteous heroism and devotion impel us to cry out: "I have but one passion! It is he! It is he!" O, the Christ passion! The Christ passion! May it inspire our thoughts, control our desires, arouse our zeal, ennoble our ideals, rule our affections, and master our entire lives!

CHAPTER II

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS!

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS!

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high his royal banner,
It must not suffer loss:
From victory unto victory
His army shall he lead,
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict,
In this his glorious day:
Ye that are men, now serve him,
Against unnumbered foes;
Your courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
Stand in his strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you;
Ye dare not trust your own:
Put on the gospel armor,
Each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls, or danger,
Be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song:
To him that overcometh,
A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of glory
Shall reign eternally.

—George Duffield, Jr.

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus!"

CHAPTER II

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS!

In the very midst of the anti-slavery conflict, not long before the outbreak of the Civil War, Dudley A. Tyng was pastor of a wealthy and influential church in Philadelphia. Among his members were many who sympathized with slavery. But Mr. Tyng regarded slavery as immoral and unchristian, and dared to tell his people so. One day while he was fearlessly discussing this subject in his pulpit one of his wardens arose and protested, and a number of leading families left the church in a rage. Soon after this incident Mr. Tyng resigned, and with some who withdrew from this church, organized the little Church of the Covenant.

The Sunday before his death Mr. Tyng preached a powerful sermon to five thousand men in Jaynes' Hall. On the following Wednesday he was watching some men shelling corn with a machine operated by a mule. He reached out his hand to stroke the neck of

the mule, when the sleeve of his silk study gown caught in the cogs of the wheel, and his arm was torn from the shoulder. He lived only a short time, and his chamber of death was a remarkable scene of holy triumph. His former warden who had denounced him came with others to ask his forgiveness. Some ministers who had not been so outspoken and courageous as the dying man, called on him. One of them said to him, "Have you any last word for us?"

"Yes," replied Tyng, "Stand up for Jesus!"

Inspired by this message, the Rev. George Duffield wrote this great hymn and read it to his people on the following Sunday at the conclusion of his sermon. The hymn as composed by Mr. Duffield had six stanzas. "My Faith Looks up to Thee" has been called the most spiritual and "Stand up, Stand up for Jesus" the most stirring of American hymns. This hymn has been sung in every place where the gospel has been preached, and has stirred multitudes of men and women to more heroic service for Christ. The dominant note of the hymn is the heroic. As you sing the hymn you can almost see the true Christian warrior, clad with the panoply of God, going forth to meet and vanquish every enemy of the cross.

This is the point of view from which we will study this immortal hymn.

First of all, this hymn contains a distinct call for Christian heroism. This call peals forth in every stanza. Every soldier of the cross is summoned to "Stand up, Stand up for Jesus!" Never was there a time in the history of the world when moral heroes and heroines were more needed than now. They are needed in home life, in business life, in social life, in political life, and in church life. Truly heroic men and women are in supreme demand. The call of the times is strengthened and made more emphatic by the call of Holy Writ. God's message to every soldier in his militant army is: "Fight the good fight of faith." "War a good warfare." "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "Having done all, stand."

The present-day type of Christianity has too little of the heroic element in it to be a thing of irresistible force in the world. It luxuriates in Sunday dressing gowns and embroidered slippers rather than buckling on the armor and going forth to stern conflict. It is shorn of much of its strength because it is largely shorn of the spirit of sacrifice and heroism. It is not crowned with the greatest

success because it is not crowned with the cross. It is robbed of mighty victories because it is not thoroughly permeated with the conquering spirit. It does not rise to heights valiant because it does not reach the depths of sacrifice.

I am not speaking to you of heroism as an abstraction—as that idealized, visionary thing commended by all but practiced by few. I speak of a sane heroism which may be practiced by people in the humblest walks of life. The heroism for which I plead is clothed with a living form and substance. It is wrought into the fabric of our daily words and deeds. It dares to resist the wrong in concrete form, to rebuke particular sins, to stand for well-defined convictions, to espouse an unpopular but a righteous cause, to bid defiance to questionable customs, to refuse to do in Rome as the Romans do; in fine, to stand as firm as the eternal hills amid moral cowards, time-servers, and triflers. This, as I understand, is what it means to be truly heroic. This, I believe, is what Dudley A. Tyng meant when he gave the heroic message to his brother ministers, "Stand up for Jesus."

The saintly Dr. Daniel Steele tells of a Baptist preacher who related to him a chapter

in his pastoral history. This preacher was pastor of a weak church, and the largest contributor to his salary was a modern Herod living in violation of the seventh commandment. In spite of the protest of most of the members, this heroic preacher had the immoral man tried and expelled from the Church. The pastor was soon starved out and forced to find another pastorate. But the disgraced church, recognizing its great mistake, began to call mightily on God. A revival broke out, and among the converted ones was "Mr. Moneybags." At his suggestion the faithful pastor was recalled. This young preacher is an admirable type of the heroic character needed in this twentieth century. It is an easy task to preach the sweet truths of the gospel to a company of saints, to preach to a congregation of Gentiles concerning the sins of Mormonism, to present temperance arguments to an audience of teetotalers, to ridicule infidels before a company of believers. It is a vastly different thing, however, for the preacher to aim directly at the living people sitting before him and, applying every sermon in a courageous way, as Nathan did to David, cry, "Thou art the man."

Dr. Louis Albert Banks once spoke as fol-

lows from his pulpit in Boston: "The phrase 'to save souls' has been made to cover a multitude of selfish sins. When I was in Seattle in the days of the anti-Chinese riots, and denounced the murders of the Chinamen from my pulpit, I was piously advised to devote myself 'to saving souls.' When in Boise City, Idaho, I denounced the growing disposition to cringe to the Mormon sentiment there, and some of the timeserving political newspapers severely reminded me it was my business 'to save souls.' And now in Boston, when I denounce the cruel combinations of capital, I am not astonished to hear the old tune, 'It is your business to save souls.' I want it distinctly understood that this pulpit has no mission to disembodied souls. My mission is to preach the pure gospel of justice and righteousness to men and women who are still in the flesh."

This is courageous and sensible language, and the principle involved is just as pertinent for the Christian layman as for the Christian preacher. God needs heroes in the laity as much as in the ministry. He needs heroic bankers, merchants, manufacturers, physicians, lawyers, teachers, and mechanics. He needs husbands, brothers, wives, and sisters to manifest a quiet and daily heroism in the sacred

precincts of home. He needs living people in this workaday world to apply the wholesome philosophy of the Nazarene to all phases of routine life. He needs church members who will magnify the mission of the church by precept and example. He needs people who have caught the vision of the life heroic, who love that vision, and who obey it unflinchingly from day to day. The tourist may read the following inscription in Saint Paul's Cathedral: "Major General Charles George Gordon, who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God."

Such is the truly heroic life. Such are its manifestations. God desires to make us all heroes and heroines. Seneca, the Roman Stoic philosopher, declared that "there is more heroism in self-denial than in deeds of arms." The supreme Master of men declared, "I am among you as he that serveth." The greatest of the apostles declared, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Why not fulfill your God-given mission in life? Be a hero! Be a heroine! On the battlefield of life "stand up for Jesus"! Do not idealize your heroism. Let not your

fancies run wild in some transcendental paradise. Be an everyday hero. Show your heroism by devoting your love, your talents, your thought, and your energy toward the uplifting and glorifying of common humanity,

'Tis not for man to trifle; life is brief,
And sin is here.
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.
We have not time to sport away the hours,
All must be earnest in a world like ours.

Not many lives, but only one have we.
One, only one.
How earnest that one life should be,
That narrow span;
Day after day spent in blessed toil,
Hour after hour bringing in new spoil.

Again this stirring hymn suggests the preparation necessary in order to live the life heroic. This thought is expressed clearly in the lines:

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
Stand in his strength alone.

Put on the gospel armor,
Each piece put on with prayer.

The preparation, then, consists in being strengthened from above, in putting on the gospel armor, and in sincere prayer. This is

the only way to prepare to lead the life heroic.

In introducing this hymn study it was said that Dudley Tyng was pastor of a wealthy and influential church. He drew a good salary. He moved among the best circles in society. He had a beautiful home and enjoyed the temporal things of life. He had an indulgent people. But something happened to interfere with the enjoyment of all these things. He reached the settled conviction that slavery is immoral and unchristian. He determined to preach against this growing evil from his pulpit. This was by no means an easy task. It meant the interruption of personal comfort. It meant opposition, trial, the breaking of the ties of friendship. This preacher realized all. He recognized his own weakness and timidity. He felt the need of a special preparation to enable him to take a heroic stand against slavery. So, alone with God, he fought his battle and won a great victory. Clad in the divine panoply, he went forth from his secret chamber fearlessly to deliver his message, to suffer trial, ridicule, and personal loss. But amid the loss of friends, position, and personal comforts, he was every inch a victor and king. Prepared to live the

life heroic, he naturally died as he had lived. So from his deathbed comes the message, "Stand up for Jesus."

Now, I frankly confess that it is not easy to live such a life. It is not child's play. We sometimes feel the force of the poet's words,

> O it is hard to work for God,
> To rise and take his part
> Upon this battlefield of earth,
> And not sometimes lose heart!

If we stood on the battlefield of life alone, we should certainly lose heart. If we had to depend upon our own wisdom and strength, we should certainly fail. If we went forth unprotected to wage warfare, we should certainly be the victims of despair. But when we are prepared for real conflicts by forming a close friendship with Christ, then the whole situation is changed. Then his presence goes with us; then his love comforts us; then his grace strengthens us; then are we made truly heroic.

When Sulla beheld his army yielding to the enemy, he leaped from his horse, laid hold of an ensign, and, rushing with it into the midst of his enemies, cried out, "'Tis here, Roman soldiers, that I intend to die!" Thus inspired

by their leader, they renewed the fight and snatched victory from the very jaws of defeat. But we have a greater Leader than Sulla, one who was "tempted in all points like as we are," one who fully recognizes our humanity and our limitations, one who walks with us over the rugged road; one who strengthens us to stand up heroically and fight the good fight; one who inspires us to think our best and act our best.

Before the author of this hymn read it to his audience that Sunday morning he preached a sermon from the text, "Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." This text suggests the preparation necessary to live the heroic life. Many good people are failing to live such a life because they never make any serious preparation to lead that type of life. If you are among that number, pray earnestly that you may find the glorious vision of the life heroic, that you may become a true soldier of the cross in this workaday world, that you may stand up with Jesus in a courageous manner on every moral battle-field, and that you may have a share in making the world better, happier, brighter.

Finally, this hymn suggests the incentives

which ought to inspire us to be heroic. These incentives are pointed out very clearly in the last stanza.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song:
To him that overcometh,
A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of glory
Shall reign eternally.

The brevity of the strife, "the victor's song," the "crown of life," reigning with Christ eternally—these are the incentives. Surely, they are sufficient to inspire the Christian soldier to fight valiantly the good fight of faith. Surely, these great incentives are sufficient to hold us steadily to the great ideal of daily moral heroism.

Strange to say, on three different occasions, the author of this hymn entered a church and found the congregation singing his hymn. On all three of these occasions the author was greatly depressed in spirit owing to "outward and inward troubles." Under these circumstances the singing of the hymn proved a great blessing. In a private letter he wrote: "The feeling of comfort was inexpressible, to

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have my own hymn thus sung to me by those unaware of my presence. It was as though an angel strengthened me." Untold thousands have thus been helped and strengthened by the singing of this stirring hymn. And one great reason why the hymn has been so helpful is because of this last stanza with its great incentives.

James M. Ludlow wrote an inspiring book entitled Incentives for Life. In this book he names the incentives which have led men to build pure, strong, noble, useful lives. No matter what our calling or occupation may be, we all need incentives to help us do our best. The father goes to his daily toil incited by his love for those depending on him, and the student patiently endures the daily grind incited by the thought of future success in life. This same truth prevails everywhere in life. The Master of men knew the disciples needed incentives to inspire them, so he promised them mansions, crowns, life blessed and eternal. In John, the fourteenth chapter, Christ presents some beautiful and inspiring incentives for living the heroic life. I believe the apostles found it easier to be brave after they had listened to these words. O, soldier in the militant army of Christ, great are the

incentives thy leader offers thee. Be encouraged by the thought that the strife here will not be long; that the cross will soon be supplanted by the crown, that the fleeting scenes of earth will soon be followed by the eternal realities of heaven; that in the "Father's house there are many mansions," that the life heroic will lead to the life in the midst of the paradise of God, that earth's dim vision will soon yield to the beatific vision, that the song of battle will soon be followed by the "victor's song." Besides these heavenly incentives there are the incentives which arise from a clear conscience, from doing good, from our duty to our brother man, and from an enriched and enlarged religious life.

The first time Dr. Duffield heard his hymn sung outside of his own denomination was in 1864 by the Christian soldiers in the Army of the James. It was their favorite hymn, and before entering the battle they sang it to receive new strength and encouragement. In like manner, soldiers of the cross for many years have been inspired with fresh courage and new hope by singing this grand old hymn of Duffield's—"Stand up, stand up for Jesus!"

Return for a moment to the dominant note

of the hymn—the call for Christian heroism. This call comes to you and to me and to every lover of Jesus Christ. This call is clear, impressive, and urgent.

One evening a young man called on Wendell Phillips to ask for his autograph. The old man treated him very kindly and interested him for several hours, showing him relics of the abolitionist days and memorials of his own labor. As the visitor was about to leave he turned to Mr. Phillips and said, "I think if I had lived in your time I would have been heroic too." This aroused the indignation of the old abolitionist, and, pointing to the saloons down the street, he replied: "Young man, you are living in my time—and in God's time. Did you hear Frances Willard last night? Be assured that no man could have been heroic then who is not heroic now. Good-night."

We read of the heroism of the early disciples of our Lord and think we would manifest the same heroism if we had the same opportunity. But the voice of the immortal Phillips is still heard: "Be assured that no man could have been heroic then who is not heroic now." Our hearts are stirred profoundly as we read the thrilling accounts of the martyrs of the

early church, and we imagine that we too would have shown the same heroism. But the message of the great anti-slavery agitator confronts us: "Be assured that no man could have been heroic then who is not heroic now." We read about the bravery of the early church fathers, the apologists, the reformers, the Primitive Methodists, and think that if we had lived in their day and amid their surroundings we too would have shown the world examples of real heroism. Once more the words of truth and soberness confront us: "Be assured that no man could have been heroic then who is not heroic now."

There are too many in these days who fold their hands in idleness and long for other times and other battle-cries. We need to heed the sharp truth in the old patriot's words. To-day is God's time. The present is your opportunity and mine. There are many outlets for heroism all around us. He who is not a hero in present duties and conflicts would never have been heroic under other circumstances or in another age. Proclaim this truth from every pulpit. Sound it upon every moral battlefield of life. Let it be heeded by every disciple of the Christ.

Accept the great lesson which this hymn

brings to you. The fields are *now* white unto the harvest. The needs are *now* very pressing. The calls for heroism *now* are many. The present age demands your courageous service. Serve your age, ever remembering that you can never serve any other. Be faithful *now*. Be true to God and yourself *now*. Be loyal *now*. Be heroic *now*. Stand up for Jesus *now* amid the "noise of battle." To-morrow you will join "the victor's song."

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift.
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.

Be strong!
Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

Be strong!
It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes; the day, how long.
Faint not, fight on! To-morrow comes the song.

—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

CHAPTER III

SOME DAY THE SILVER CORD WILL BREAK

SOME DAY THE SILVER CORD WILL BREAK

Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing;
But, O, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King!

Some day my earthly house will fall,
I cannot tell how soon 'twill be,
But this I know—my All in All
Has now a place in heaven for me.

Some day, when fades the golden sun,
Beneath the rosy tinted west,
My blessèd Lord shall say, "Well done!"
And I shall enter into rest.

Some day—till then I'll watch and wait,
My lamp all trimmed and burning bright,
That when my Saviour opes the gate,
My soul to him may take its flight.

CHORUS

And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story—Saved by grace.

—Fanny J. Crosby.

"Some day the silver cord will break."

CHAPTER III

SOME DAY THE SILVER CORD WILL BREAK

FANNY J. CROSBY was born in South East, Putnam County, New York, March 24, 1820. When only about six weeks old she lost the use of her sight through the ignorant application of a poultice to her eyes. When she was less than a year old her father, who was a noble Christian man, passed to his reward. Fanny then became the special object of her godly mother's love, prayers, and training. Before she was nine years of age she made up her mind to be contented with her lot. While others pitied her and gave her reason to murmur, she wrote,

> O, what a happy soul am I!
> Although I cannot see,
> I am resolved that in this world
> Contented I will be.

At the age of fifteen she entered the institution for the blind in New York city. After a few years spent here, her instructors dis-

covered that she had unusual poetic gifts. When noted persons visited the institution Fanny was called upon to welcome them by reciting an original poem. She was especially honored by reciting her poems in both Houses of Congress. In due time she became a teacher in the institution and taught the blind for eleven years. In 1858 she was married to Alexander Van Alstyne, a blind teacher of the school in which she herself taught. He was an accomplished scholar and musician. They lived happily together until his death, June 18, 1902. At her husband's special request she continued to sign her maiden name to her writings. Among her many distinguished friends have been several Presidents of the United States. Grover Cleveland prized her friendship, and during his last days at Princeton she visited him a number of times.

She wrote more than eight thousand hymns, a goodly number of which have become popular among all denominations. She united with the Thirtieth Street Methodist Episcopal Church in New York city in 1851, and at the time of her death, February 12, 1915, she was a member of First Methodist Episcopal Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Among her best known hymns are, "Safe in

the Arms of Jesus," "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour," "Rescue the Perishing," and "Some Day the Silver Cord Will Break."

Mr. Ira D. Sankey, the famous gospel singer, gives the following account of the origin of "Some Day the Silver Cord Will Break." He says: "L. H. Biglow, after attending a prayer meeting where the subject was 'Grace,' had asked Fanny Crosby to write a hymn on that subject. She immediately retired to an adjoining room, and in the course of an hour returned with the words, 'Some day the silver cord will break.' Mr. Biglow secured the words from her, and put them in the safe among other hymns which she had written; but the song was evidently forgotten until recited by its author at Northfield in 1894. An English reporter who was present sent the address made by Miss Crosby on that occasion together with the poem to a London paper. In due time I received a copy of this paper. Cutting the poem out, I handed it to George C. Stebbins, asking him to set it to music." Thus was given to the world this favorite hymn with its sweet and fitting tune. This hymn is loved throughout Christendom, and has blessed and comforted multitudes of weary folk. It is the purpose of this study

to interpret the spirit and thought of this famous hymn.

I note, first of all, that this hymn emphasizes the sharp distinction between the body and the spirit. The author suggests this thought very clearly in the following lines:

> Some day the silver cord will break.
> Some day my earthly house will fall.

"Some day the silver cord" which binds the immortal spirit to the mortal body will break asunder, and the freed spirit will pass to realms of eternal light. "Some day" the "earthly house" in which we are now dwelling will fall, and the spirit will enter into that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Paul sharply differentiates the body and spirit as follows: "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." His meaning is very evident if we paraphrase the verse as follows: "We who dwell within these bodies, which may appropriately be called 'earthly houses' or 'tabernacles,' know that when death separates body and spirit we have an eternal dwelling place in heaven." Another

passage is equally suggestive of this truth, namely, "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, . . . then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." I think the author of this hymn must have had both these passages in mind when she wrote. Many other biblical writers also draw a clearly defined line between the body and spirit. Above all, Jesus Christ made this truth very plain.

It is interesting to note that most modern philosophers take the same view of man. Lotze wrote, "At death the soul passes away, the spirit ripens to a new existence." Fichte wrote, "The fact of self-consciousness can only be explained on the supposition that the soul is a real essence, distinct from the organism." Nathaniel Culverwell wrote, "The body—that is dust; the soul—it is a bud of eternity."

Frequently the body has been referred to as a machine through which the soul operates upon the outer world, as a "harp of a thousand strings upon which the spirit plays the music it conceives," and as the "boat which the real man rows across the bay of time." The new psychology admits that the soul and body are so distinct that the soul may exist

without the body. G. Campbell Morgan says: "Essentially man is a spirit. Apparently man is a body. That is to say, the unseen but essential fact in human life is that of the spirit." Bailey wrote, "The temples perish, but the God still lives." Montgomery writes in a similar strain: "The soul, immortal as its sire, shall never die." And Shakespeare also: "And her immortal part with angels lives." Hood puts the thought tersely: "What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind. What is the soul? It is immaterial." Beecher says, "As prisoners in castles look out of their grated windows at the smiling landscape, so we, from this life, as from dungeon-bars, look forth to the heavenly land." Lyman Abbott says: "The body is the organ; the spirit is the player on the organ. When he pushes in the stops and locks the instrument, he does not cease to be. Now, what happens in what we call death is the separation of spirit and body. Science can define neither life nor death. We only know that this spirit withdraws and leaves the dwelling untenanted; the musician stops playing, locks his instrument and goes away; the king abdicates his sovereignty over his earthly domain and departs. And presently the kingdom with no king on

the throne dissolves; the organ with no organist to play upon it falls to pieces; the tent abandoned by its tenants drops in hopeless ruin on the ground. But this affords no slightest reason for thinking that the king is dead, the organist is extinguished, the tenant has ceased to be." Tennyson states this truth as follows:

> Eternal form shall still divide
> The eternal soul from all beside;
> And I shall know him when we meet.

Dr. Wayland Hoyt tells of a friend of his who was conversing with a woman who was an avowed skeptic. She was severely criticising Christians for their foolish beliefs, and finally she asked, "Do you really believe, sir, that you have a soul?" He replied: "No, madam. I do not believe that I have a soul. I am a soul; I have a body." This was a fine answer. This should be our clear conception of the body and soul. This was Fanny Crosby's conception when she wrote this beautiful hymn.

Frederic Lawrence Knowles wrote a highly suggestive poem entitled "The Tenant." It was found after his death among his unpublished manuscripts. The poem sets forth in such a clear and striking manner the truth we

have been discussing that we will quote it entire:

This body is my house—it is not I;
Herein I sojourn till, in some far sky,
I lease a fairer dwelling, built to last
Till all the carpentry of time is past.
When from my high place viewing this lone star,
What shall I care where these poor timbers are?
What though the crumbling walls turn dust and loam—
I shall have left them for a larger home.
What though the rafters break, the stanchions rot,
When earth has dwindled to a glimmering spot!
When thou, clay cottage, fallest, I'll immerse
My long-cramp'd spirit in the universe.
Through uncomputed silences of space
I shall yearn upward to the leaning Face.
The ancient heavens will roll aside for me,
As Moses monarch'd the dividing sea.
This body is my house—it is not I.
Triumphant in this faith I live, and die.

Again, this hymn emphasizes the old and precious doctrine that to the Christian the separation of soul and body marks the beginning of the heavenly and eternal life. This thought is clearly set forth in the following lines:

But, O, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King!

But this I know—my All in All
Has now a place in heaven for me.

Some day when fades the golden sun,
Beneath the rosy-tinted west,
My blessèd Lord shall say, "Well done!"
And I shall enter into rest.

And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story—Saved by grace.

Thus does the author sing sweetly and triumphantly of her exit from this present life and her entrance into the next. She looks forward to that day when the "silver cord will break," and the "earthly house fall," and when she will see her Saviour "face to face."

A preacher from Scotland when introduced to Fanny Crosby, said, "Miss Crosby, I think it is a great pity that the Good Master, when he showered so many gifts upon you, did not give you sight." She answered, "Do you know that, if at my birth I had been able to make one petition to my Creator, it would have been that I should be made blind?"

"Why?" said the astonished preacher.

"Because, when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Saviour." As Miss Crosby was only six weeks old when she lost her sight, she was enraptured by the thought that the first face she would see will be the face of the one altogether lovely—Christ.

In a letter to a friend of mine she wrote, "May you have an abundant entrance into that upper and better kingdom where we shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb." Thus in the hymn under discussion and in many of her other hymns and writings does she speak positively, clearly, eloquently of the sure entrance into the better life when soul and body part company.

When the silver cord is broken, when the earthly house falls, when the frail tent collapses, when the perishable tabernacle crumbles into fragments, when the machine wears out, when the harp is hushed into silence, when the boat has crossed life's river, when the door of the prison cell is thrown open, when the organist pushes in the stops and locks the instrument, then the freed spirit, the real self, the immortal soul takes the wings of the morning and flies in triumph to the bosom of the waiting Christ. Like a sweet bell peal forth the triumphant notes: "To live is Christ, and to die is gain." "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. . . . Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where

is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." On the very day when the silver cord breaks and the house falls, the Son of God speaks as he spoke to the languishing penitent on the cross—"To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Then, clothed with immortality, the ransomed and liberated soul entereth into that "city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God," and possesses a "building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

It has been well said, "Our soul is in our body as the bird is in the shell, which soon breaks and the bird flies out: the shell of the body breaking, the soul flies into eternity." Byron exclaims, "Immortality o'ersweeps all pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and peals, like the eternal thunder of the deep, into my ears this truth, 'Thou livest forever.'" As Victor Hugo neared the eternal shore he declared, "The nearer I approach to the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies which invite me." Karl Ritter, the great geographer, says: "We are not placed in this world for nothing. We must

ripen here for another world." Karl von Martius, the noted naturalist, says: "What no eyes have seen, what no ears have heard, that is the eternal happiness which I expect after I have laid aside my human body." Friedrich von Schelling, the well-known German philosopher, says: "Although I want to live and labor as long as God lets me, I consider the moment of my death as the most precious one of my life." Sir William Thompson (Lord Kelvin), the great English philosopher, says: "The belief in personal immortality is generic. I believe that people who do not believe in immortality are abnormal." Sir Oliver J. Lodge, the famous scientist, says: "The death of the body does not convey any assurance of the soul's death. Death is a *change* indeed, a sort of emigration, a wrenching away of the old familiar scenes, a solemn, portentous fact; but it is not annihilation." Longfellow once wrote,

> Death is the chilliness that precedes the dawn;
> We shudder for a moment, then awake
> In the broad sunshine of another life.

What a beautiful and sublime view of death is this which is given to us by apostles, scholars, philosophers, scientists, and poets! Not loss,

but gain to die! The corruptible and the mortal transformed into the incorruptible and immortal! The life temporal merged into the life eternal! Earth exchanged for paradise! A crumbling tabernacle exchanged for a mansion which will never decay! A bird bursting the shell and soaring to the celestial heights! Earthly fruit ripened for the heavenly harvest! The moment of death the most precious one of life! The jarring, harsh sounds of life here giving way to the immortal symphonies of heaven!

Sir Edwin Arnold sums up this view of death in a terse and beautiful manner as follows:

> Loving friends, be wise and dry
> Straightway every weeping eye;
> What ye lift upon the bier
> Is not worth a wistful tear.
> 'Tis an empty seashell, one
> Out of which the pearl is gone;
> Yet ye wail, my foolish friends,
> While the man whom ye call "dead"
> In unspoken bliss instead
> Lives, and loves you; lost, 'tis true,
> To the light which shines for you;
> But in light ye cannot see
> Of undefiled felicity,
> And enlarging paradise,
> Lives the life that never dies.

When ye come where I have stepped
Ye will marvel why ye wept,
Ye will know, by true love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.

Here is the sublime Christian view of death. Our Heavenly Father teaches us to look upon death not as a curse but as a blessing; not as an enemy but as a friend, not as a dark midnight but as a glorious sunrise, not as an angel of destruction but as an angel of mercy, not as a dismal messenger of despair but as a bright messenger of hope, not as an hour of disaster but as an hour of holy triumph, not as an end of all things but as the real beginning of the best things, not as an ignominious defeat but as a complete victory.

This is the way Paul looked upon death: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Such is the way Peter looked upon death: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Such was John's

conception: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Such a conception of death led Bishop Haven to exclaim, "There is no death, there is no death"; led Longfellow to write,

> There is no death, what seems so is transition;
> This life of mortal breath,
> Is but the suburb of the life elysian,
> Whose portal we call death.

Browning, just before passing on, said, "Never say of me that I am dead." So Tennyson, about to enter the door which leads to the eternal city, whispered, "I have opened it." Cookman, also seeing the pearly gates open, exclaimed, "I am sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb."

These experiences are possible—are a blessed reality—because Jesus Christ hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He is death's mighty conqueror. He removed the sting, the terror, the humiliation of death by trampling this enemy under foot with a shout of triumph. He illumined the midnight darkness of the tomb with light that shall never fade away.

He entered the valley of the shadow of death which men feared so greatly, and showed us that it was but a shadow after all, and that behind the shadow was a brightness above the brightness of the noonday sun. He entered to the very midst of the cold, dark river which flows between the mortal and the immortal and banished its chill and taught us that its kindly waters lave the golden shores. So, then, the Christian does not see death; he only sees the heavens open and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God.

Pope, in his ode entitled, "The Dying Christian to His Soul," exultingly sings:

> The world recedes; it disappears!
> Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
> With sounds seraphic ring:
> Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
> O Grave! where is thy victory?
> O Death! where is thy sting?

Finally, this hymn emphasizes the importance of making the spiritual rather than the physical preeminent in this present life. This is especially suggested in the last verse:

> Some day; till then I'll watch and wait,
> My lamp all trimmed and burning bright,
> That when my Saviour opes the gate,
> My soul to him may take its flight.

The expression in the chorus, "Saved by grace," is also suggestive of the same thought. Miss Crosby's life was characterized by making the spiritual preeminent in all things. Hers was a life of sweet trust, of patient waiting, of earnest service, of unselfish devotion to others. She kept her spiritual lamp "all trimmed and burning bright" throughout her long life. Her ninety-first birthday was duly observed in her home church in Bridgeport. In an address at that time she said: "The Lord has done great things for me, whereof I am glad. He has preserved my health, my strength, my intellect. He has renewed the vigor of my youth. He has made me to lie down in green pastures and led me beside still waters, and amid all my waywardness he has never left nor forsaken me. He has covered me with his feathers, and under his wings do I trust." What a beautiful testimony is this after her long walk with her Master. It sounds the dominant note of her life and this note is a distinctively spiritual one.

Now, because we cannot tell how soon the silver cord may break, because these earthly houses will surely fall, because these bodies are mortal while we are immortal, we should see to

it that the spiritual life should always have the preeminence over the physical life, that the soul should triumph over the body, that we should keep in all subjection the earthly house in which we are dwelling.

It is said that when Nana Sahib lost his last battle in India he fell back into the deadly jungles of Inheri. He carried with him a ruby of great luster and value. He perished in those jungles and the beautiful ruby was never found. Each body contains a ruby of priceless value. Its value is so great that the Master propounded the greatest question ever asked concerning it, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Many, alas! allow their bodies to carry this priceless ruby into the jungles of pride, passion, appetite, greed, falsehood, infidelity, vanity, mammon worship, and worldliness.

The degradation of an immortal soul is such a terrible thing that no words can adequately describe it; no artist is skillful enough to paint it. In vain do we search for anything which will illustrate the awfulness of its dethronement. Imagine, if you will, an eagle soaring, as I have seen one in Yellowstone canyon, facing the glorious splendor of the

noonday sun and basking in its golden beams. Then imagine the degradation of the noble bird as it is chained to the wall in some dungeon. Imagine a king clothed in purple, surrounded by a large retinue of servants, elevated upon a lofty throne and wielding a powerful scepter. Then imagine him stripped of power and grandeur and sent to an ignominious death like Charles I. Imagine an archangel speeding upon errands of mercy as the special ambassador of Jehovah. Then imagine him plunged into the bottomless pit and becoming the companion of the damned. Thus, try to picture by comparison the most deplorable calamity this world has ever known —the dethronement, the degradation, the despoiling of a human soul. Such a calamity, however, cannot be described by any illustration which the universe can furnish.

When Lysimachus was engaged in a war with the Getae, he was so affected with the torments of thirst that he offered his kingdom to his enemies for permission to quench it. After slaking his thirst he exclaimed, "Ah, wretched me! who, for such a momentary gratification, have lost so great a kingdom!" Alas, how many in this world, who for the momentary pleasures of sin, degrade their

souls, dethrone their real power, and part with the kingdom of heaven. As the degradation of a human soul is the most terrible thing in this world, the salvation, the uplifting, the developing, the glorifying of a human soul is the most beautiful thing in this world. There is nothing that can be compared with it. It is greater than fame, honor, power, riches, success, and all that man counts great. The heart of the infinite God yearns to see man make the spiritual triumph over the physical, the soul over the body. This is of the utmost importance. This should be the supreme aim in life.

Some friends tried to sympathize with Frederick Douglass once when he was compelled to ride in the baggage car on account of his color. A person said to him, "I am sorry that you have been degraded in this manner." But Douglass instantly replied: "They cannot degrade Frederick Douglass. The soul that is within me no man can degrade." Truer words were never spoken. The pure soul, the noble soul, the Christlike soul can never be degraded by any environment, cannot be polluted by circumstances, cannot be overthrown by any earthly trial, cannot be destroyed by the storms of adversity. The

man possessing such a soul, conscious of his purity and power, bids defiance to environment, trials, difficulties, dangers, adversities, and exclaims, "The soul that is within me no man can degrade." The favorite maxim of Whitefield was to preach as Apelles painted—for eternity. Thus it is with the man whose spiritual life controls and directs the physical. He prays with eternity in view; he loves with eternity in view; he endures trial with eternity in view; he serves his fellows with eternity in view; he rebukes wrong with eternity in view; he upholds the good and the true with eternity in view; he dies with eternity in view.

When Sir Walter Scott was nearing the end of this present life he looked up into the face of a friend and said, "Be good; nothing else counts when you come to lie here." Ah, yes, in the dying hour, purity, goodness, nobility, character, Christlikeness is all that counts. All else is utterly useless. At that supreme moment everything depends upon the triumph of the spiritual over the physical; upon the victory which the soul has achieved over the earthly house of this tabernacle. O the glorious possibility of such a triumph! It is possible for the soul to triumph over the body, for the spiritual to be preeminent over the

physical, for our better selves to assert supremacy over things earthly, to keep under the body and bring it into subjection to the laws of God, to be greater than our environment, to conquer every besetting sin, to so live that one sweet day we shall drop this robe of flesh and rise to be with God in our eternal home. Let us realize all these glorious possibilities in our individual lives, and then at life's close we

shall see him face to face,
And tell the story—Saved by grace.

CHAPTER IV

GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY

GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY

God moves in a mysterious way
  His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
  And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
  Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
  And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
  The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
  In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
  But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
  He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
  Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
  But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
  And scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
  And he will make it plain.

—*William Cowper.*

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

CHAPTER IV

GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY

This hymn has been regarded by many as the greatest hymn ever written on the subject of Divine Providence. James T. Fields declared that to be the author of such a hymn was an achievement that "angels themselves might envy." It has a peculiar significance when we consider the circumstances which gave it birth. It was written by William Cowper in the twilight of departing reason. Cowper experienced strange attacks of brain disease, and in referring to these attacks he wrote, "The meshes of that fine network, the brain, are composed of such mere spinner's threads in me that when a long thought finds its way into them it buzzes, and twangs, and bustles about at such a rate as seems to threaten the whole contexture." Thus does the author pathetically describe his mental perplexities when the dark shadows of his troubled mind were settling upon him.

Tormented by the conviction that he was doomed to end his life in the River Ouse, he

ordered a post chaise, and bade the driver to proceed to a certain spot. One account says that the driver could not find the spot, while another account says a man was found seated on the very place from which he expected to spring into the river. Returning home, it is said he threw himself upon his own knife, but the blade broke. Then he attempted to hang himself to the ceiling, but the rope parted. As he emerged from this brain storm and realized how good and merciful God is, he sat down and wrote this memorable hymn.

The first truth suggested in this hymn is that every life is involved in more or less mystery. "God moves in a mysterious way." The mysteries of Providence, how they baffle us! We frequently raise the brief question, "Why," only to be answered by profound silence. Then a chill seems to fall upon the soul. This present world is full of mystery. No matter how optimistic we may be, the fact remains that deep shadows are cast all about us. It is natural for every rational human being to raise the question, "Why?" Why are epidemics, plagues, pestilences, and famines permitted? Why are vessels sunk by storms and the earth staggered by earthquakes? Why do multitudes go through life deprived of

seeing, hearing, speaking, or of reason? Why should good men and women die in their prime when apparently most needed? Why do others who are sinful and worthless live on to curse the world? Why should parents be taken away and leave innocent, helpless children to suffer? Why are we not permitted to hold fellowship with the departed? Why do we have to bear so many burdens, face so many temptations, pass through so many trials, and endure so many sorrows? Over and over again the involuntary cry of the human heart is, "Why, why, why!" At such times many have become skeptical and have cried out with Carlyle, "God sits in heaven and does nothing." Perhaps the most pathetic sight in this present world is to see a man involved in the mysteries of life and losing faith in the goodness, justice, and mercy of God.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox thought of the mysteries of life when she wrote that suggestive poem entitled "Gethsemane." I quote the first and last stanzas only:

> In golden youth when seems the earth,
> A summer-land of singing mirth,
> When souls are glad and hearts are light,
> And not a shadow lurks in sight,

We do not know it, but there lies
Somewhere veiled under evening skies
A garden which we all must see—
The garden of Gethsemane.

. . . . . .

All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say,
"Not mine but thine," who only pray,
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see
The purpose in Gethsemane.

Again, Cowper's hymn teaches us that God has a great design in all that seems mysterious to us. This thought is suggested in a beautiful manner in the following lines:

Deep in unfathomable mines
  Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
  And works his sovereign will.

His purposes will ripen fast,
  Unfolding every hour:
The bud may have a bitter taste,
  But sweet will be the flower.

Cowper was thinking of the great trial of his life, his melancholia. He could not understand why God permitted it. It was a profound mystery to him. Yet, in all his suffer-

ings, he believed God had a great design, and the above stanzas declare his faith in that design.

Is there a great divine purpose amid all the mysteries which surround us? I answer with an emphatic "Yes." There can be no question about this. To take any other view plunges us into a sea of utter hopelessness and terrible despair. Let us bear in mind one great fact, namely, that the supreme purpose of God and the great end toward which he is working in everything is a moral one. While there are some superficial appearances to the contrary, the universe reveals a divine moral order and design. This is revealed in the human consciousness. In a moral sense God can reveal himself only in the soul of a man. Any man, if he wills, can realize God's presence in his own spirit. It has been well said, "Not in the world, but within our own selves resides the power to make life sweeter than any song or richer than treasures of gold."

There is an evident moral purpose in all that God does. There are many things which lead us to the conclusion that God is governing this world in the interest of the moral order rather than the physical. God is more interested in love, truth, righteousness, and

moral or spiritual development than he is in any or all the physical factors of the universe. It will help us greatly to discover design amid our mysteries if we will keep constantly this thought in view.

This is certainly the view of the Scriptures. "All things work together for good to them that love God." "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." These and scores of other passages point to a great design which God has amid the mysteries of this earthly life.

The world is God's great university for the sons of men. The curriculum has been arranged by the divine hand. It includes temptation, trial, disappointment, heartaches, burden bearing, sorrow, and mystery of many kinds. There is a great moral purpose running through this divine course of study. It is evident everywhere. Trouble, adversity, mystery of every sort, are the divinely chosen teachers in God's university. All events in the life of the godly man are educational and contribute to his spiritual culture and lead to perfected manhood. Supreme manhood is the product of the curriculum suggested above.

I desire to emphasize the first two words of

this hymn—"God moves." Amid the mysteries by which we are surrounded it is not man who moves, but God. And just at this point the philosophy of most people is wrong. Most people would make life free from trouble if they could. For this they plan and toil, but are always doomed to disappointment. Why? Because trouble and mystery are essential parts of God's plan for this present life. They occupy an important place in God's curriculum. It is God who moves.

> . . . Behind the dim unknown,
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping
> watch above his own.

You ask me why trouble and mystery are important parts of God's plan for us, and I reply that we know only in part. But because it is God's plan we should be content. Here is where faith must be exercised. My conception of my heavenly Father is such that I believe he is too wise to err and too just to be unkind. Such a conception of the Infinite makes all clear. Why resist the plan if it is God's plan? Why refuse to be submissive students in God's university if he has arranged the course of study and the necessary discipline? Why plan and toil to escape trouble

when God in his infinite wisdom has planned trouble as a part of our training? Why increase the difficulties of this present life by adding to its natural limitations the futile attempt to reach the impossible? Happy is the man who has God's viewpoint and who adjusts himself to the natural fact that trouble and mystery are to be the normal condition of his life. We are not responsible for this condition. We did not create it. We cannot change it. Two courses are open for us. We can obey the law, and thus adjust ourselves to our physical and spiritual environment, or we can resist the law, and suffer the consequences. Recognizing and obeying this law bring harmony, peace, and comfort into life.

Longfellow saw design amid the mysteries of life when he wrote:

> We see but dimly through the mists and vapors,
> Amid these earthly damps.
> What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers
> May be heaven's distant lamps.

Dr. Gunsaulus recognized God's plan when he said: "The sad agonizing thing in your life will be your crowning influence. Trials are but the refining fire through which you will pass, and in a little while you will shine as a

great priceless gem of rarest beauty in the great eternal city." Beecher also had God's plan and process in view when he wrote: "The steel that has suffered most is the best steel. It has been in the furnace again and again. It has been on the anvil; it has been tight in the jaws of the vise; it has felt the teeth of the rasp; it has been ground by emery; it has been heated and hammered and filed until it does not know itself, and it comes out a splendid knife."

The tapestry weaver does his work on the reverse side. He only sees the ends of the warp threads and hears the rattle of the loom. All seems to be a mystery of tangle and confusion. The weaver cannot see the beautiful picture he is making on the other side. So we are weaving the fabric of our lives. We are now working on the reverse side. "Now we see through a glass, darkly" (or [Greek] "in a riddle"). Now we "know in part." If we are patient and trustful, God will one day let us see the other side of the pattern, and I am very sure it will be beautiful. Then we shall see "face to face." Then we shall know as we are now known. Then we shall behold the wisdom of God's plan for our earthly lives.

And after, I saw, in a robe of light,
That weaver in the sky;
The angel's wings were not more bright,
The stars grew pale, it nigh.

And wherever a tear had fallen down
Gleamed out a diamond rare,
And jewels befitting a monarch's crown
Were the footprints left by care.

And wherever had swept the breath of a sigh
Was left a rich perfume,
And with light from the fountain of bliss in the sky
Shone the labor of sorrow and gloom.

This matchless hymn further teaches us that God's love, mercy, and wisdom should give us courage amid life's mysteries. How inspiring are the lines:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

If, as we have seen, trouble and mystery enter into God's plan for us, then we should daily take "fresh courage" because he has promised to give us abundant support. Amid shadows we may hear the voice of the loving Father, saying: "Be still and know that I am God." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." "Fear thou not; for I am

with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Now, these words are the plain, direct, emphatic message to God's children passing through a world of mystery. If the Fatherhood of God means anything, it means a revelation of his providential care. "As one whom his mother comforteth"—we all know what this means. How the memories of childhood come to us all! Our mothers dispelled our fears, assuaged our griefs, carried our burdens, soothed our hurts, guided our footsteps, and wiped away our tears. Amid the troubles of childhood one always finds a safe refuge in the arms of his mother.

This truth is illustrated by an incident in the life of one of our popular journalists and lecturers who became exceedingly weary amid a multitude of cares and duties. One day he was missed from his office. Search was made for him, but he could not be found. After a time it was learned that he had dropped everything and fled to his aged mother in the country. Entering the old home, he said, "Mother, I am tired, and I want you to rest me as you used to when I was a child." She

prepared for him a supper just like she used to prepare when he was a child. Then she spoke soothing words to him and read him one of the old Bible stories. Then, kneeling at her knee, he repeated "Our Father" and "Now I lay me down to sleep," just as he used to do in days of yore. Then he went into his old bedchamber, retired, and his old mother tucked him in the bed and kissed him good night, as she had done hundreds of times before. Then he fell into a sweet sleep as his mother sang a song of childhood and rested her hand on his brow. Now, our heavenly Father's love is stronger than a mother's love. He declares that he will sustain the same tender relationship to us as our mothers have. Do you believe it? If so, amid your shadows and mysteries, go direct to him and you will find abiding peace, soothing rest, and sweet refreshment.

Dr. Cuyler puts this thought tersely as follows: "He who piloted the patriarch through the Deluge, and fed the prophet by the brook, and supplied the widow's cruse, and watched over the imprisoned apostle, and numbers every hair of our heads, he has every one of us on his great, almighty heart! What fools we are to tire ourselves out and break our-

selves down while such an all-powerful Helper is close by our side!" Whittier expressed the same thought in the beautiful lines:

I know not where his islands lift
  Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
  Beyond his love and care.

And so beside the silent sea,
  I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from him can come to me
  On ocean or on shore.

During the "cotton famine" in Lancashire, in 1865, just after the close of the Civil War, one of the millowners called his employees together and told them he must close the mills. This was a great blow to these humble toilers as it brought them face to face with poverty and suffering. For a moment all was silent. Then suddenly there rose the sweet voice of a girl—a Sunday school teacher—and she sang the words of the stanza, beginning, "Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take." It is said that the effect on the large number of mill hands was wonderful. They faced this great crisis in their lives with faith and courage. In like manner, multitudes of weary, disappointed toilers have experienced renewed hope and courage by this grand old hymn of Cowper's.

As long as feet become weary, hands become tired, eyes become dim, hearts become heavy, and minds become dazed, so long will this inspiring and comforting hymn impart strength, fortitude, patience, submission.

As a final lesson this hymn teaches that heaven will make all our mysteries plain. This is suggested clearly in the last stanza:

> Blind unbelief is sure to err,
> And scan his work in vain:
> God is his own interpreter,
> And he will make it plain.

In 1841 Dr. Nicholas Murray lost his only son by scarlet fever, and he and his wife were in the deepest grief. Murray's friend, Dr. Archibald Alexander, wrote him a letter of condolence which contained the following passage: "Read Cowper's hymn, 'God moves in a mysterious way,' etc. Christ seems to say: 'What I do you know not now, but you shall know hereafter.' 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'"

Here is one of the most comforting thoughts in this great hymn. All these shadows, sorrows, and mysteries will be plain when we reach our Father's home. "Earth has no sorrows heaven cannot heal." The buds of

earth oft have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the full blown flowers of heaven. Mysteries will not be interpreted until we reach heaven, but there the loving Father will make them plain.

I went aboard the British war vessel, the Challenger, in Honolulu harbor. The chief gunner showed me through the vessel and explained everything very carefully. He led me into the conning tower, where the commander takes his position during an engagement and directs the movements of the vessel and the men at the guns. The individual gunner sees only a small part of the field of battle and consequently would often make mistakes if left to himself. The commander in the conning tower sees the entire field of battle and gives directions to every gunner. The gunner always obeys the commands from the conning tower even when he thinks his own plan would be better. Do you not see the lesson? It is so plain that he who runs may read. Our great Divine Commander from his position sees the entire field of battle. We see only a small part. Oftentimes we think our own way would be best. Sometimes we question the wisdom of the divine commands. But if we obey every command on this battle-

field, I am very sure that when the glories of heaven burst upon our ravished vision we shall find that every command was given in love and in wisdom. All present mysteries will disappear and we shall find that God knew best concerning every phase of our lives in this world.

In that day we shall see how well-balanced were all God's thoughts of us and plans for us. Maltbie D. Babcock expresses this thought in a striking manner as follows: "Some views of life are never understood except in a review; some prospects or aspects never appreciated except in retrospect. Reserve your judgment. Time will vindicate God, and if it does not set you singing, eternity will."

A classmate tells of an experience he had in one of his pastorates. He became acquainted with an invalid who had been bedridden for twenty-six years. Not for a single waking moment had she been entirely free from pain during all these years. She was a refined, cultured woman of noble Christian character. One day my friend said to her, "Hattie, do you not expect some compensation for all this suffering?"

She smiled and replied, "O, yes. It will be all right some time when I get home."

There must be a place in the great beyond where all troublesome contradictions will be straightened out, where all unexplained problems will be solved, and where all the mysteries of this world will be made plain. The human heart sighs for such a place. Man's intuition tells him there is such a place. The failures and incompleteness of the life that now is point to such a place. The Divine Master definitely declared, "I go to prepare a place for you." Until then, O my soul, be patient and trustful, abiding under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty.

Not now, but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears,
And there, some time, we'll understand.

We'll catch the broken thread again,
And finish what we here began;
Heaven will the mysteries explain,
And then, ah, then, we'll understand.

We'll know why clouds instead of sun
Were over many a cherished plan;
Why song has ceased when scarce begun;
'Tis there, some time, we'll understand.

Why what we long for most of all,
Eludes so oft our eager hand;
Why hopes are crushed and castles fall,
Up there, some time, we'll understand.

God knows the way, he holds the key,
He guides us with unerring hand;
Some time with tearless eyes we'll see;
Yes, there, up there, we'll understand.

Then trust in God through all thy days;
Fear not, for he doth hold thy hand;
Though dark thy way, still sing and praise
Some time some time, we'll understand.

CHAPTER V

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE

Nearer, my God, to thee,
  Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
  That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
  Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
  Nearer to thee!

Though like the wanderer,
  The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
  My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
  Nearer to thee!

There let the way appear,
  Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me,
  In mercy given:
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
  Nearer to thee!

Then, with my waking thoughts
  Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
  Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
  Nearer to thee!

Or if, on joyful wing
  Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
  Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
  Nearer to thee!

—*Sarah F. Adams.*

"Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!"

CHAPTER V

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE

For many years this hymn has been a general favorite among all classes of people throughout the civilized world. The dominant note of the hymn appeals powerfully to the human heart.

It was written by Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams, the second daughter of Benjamin Flower, editor and proprietor of the Cambridge (England) Intelligencer. She wrote quite a number of hymns, but this one hymn will perpetuate her memory more than all her other writings combined. One hymnologist has said, "It has become a classic in hymnology and is universally beloved and approved by all branches of the church."

The late King Edward of England expressed the conviction that among serious hymns there is none more touching nor one that goes more truly to the heart than "Nearer, My God, to thee." As we study this favorite

hymn we will find that King Edward's estimate of the hymn is conservative.

The first thought suggested by the hymn is that amid the crosses of life our prayer should be, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee.

The author of this hymn knew what it means to bear heavy crosses. Her mother died when she was a little girl. So she was deprived of a mother's love, care, and training. She had one sister, Eliza, who died in 1846 of consumption after a long illness. Sarah was passionately devoted to her only sister, and her long illness and death were a heavy cross to bear. Then Sarah herself had a very feeble constitution and never possessed good health. After suffering much from bodily weakness and pain she died two years after her sister, at the age of forty-three. The crosses she thus bore give us a new conception of the first stanza of this hymn. These lines had their birth in the very depths of her own bitter experiences. Amid her crosses she fervently prayed, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

We too have our crosses. This is the common lot of humanity. These crosses are many and varied. Ill health, thwarted ambitions, domestic infelicity, buried hopes, business reverses, broken friendships, unrequited love, educational deficiencies—these are some of the crosses among the many which depress the human heart and rob life of much of its sweetness. I know not what your individual cross may be, but you know and God knows. I venture the assertion, however, that you have sometimes wished that you might have a different cross or that you might exchange crosses with somebody whom you regard as more fortunate. But if you were permitted to change your cross, you would find that your new one was as heavy as your old one, if not heavier.

Years ago I read a poem entitled, "The Changed Cross." It pictured a discouraged woman who imagined her cross was heavier than those of others about her, and wished she might choose another instead of her own. She fell asleep and dreamed she was led to a place where many crosses lay, crosses of various sizes and shapes. One was set in jewels and gold, but when she tried to bear it she found it was far heavier than she could

bear. Then she saw another lovely one entwined with beautiful flowers. She lifted it, but underneath the fragrant flowers were cruel thorns which pierced her flesh. So she lifted one cross after another only to find that each was heavier than her old cross. At last she came to a very plain cross with only a few words of love inscribed upon it. She took this up and found that it was easier to bear than any of the others. Suddenly the glory of heaven shone upon this cross and she recognized that it was her own old cross again. Then she bowed to God's will and said,

"Whate'er his love sees good to send,
I'll trust it's best, because he knows the end."

Now, what you and I need is not a new or changed cross, but grace to bear sweetly our old cross. Blessed is that man, that woman, who bravely bears the old cross and earnestly prays, "Nearer, my God, to thee." We do not need new crosses, but new graces. We do not need changed crosses, but we need to change our attitude toward our old crosses. That old cross of yours will not be too heavy if you cease to chafe under it and believe that it is the Father's will. That old cross of yours will not crush you to the earth if you ask

humanity's Burden-bearer to help you bear it. That old cross of yours will not rob life of beauty, sweetness, strength, if your daily, fervent prayer is, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

Dr. George Matheson has expressed this thought in a beautiful manner as follows: "My God, I have never thanked thee for my thorn. I have thanked thee a thousand times for my roses, but not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross; but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that I have climbed to thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow."

Confucius said: "Respect the gods, but keep them at a distance." Now, this is the attitude of some people toward God as they stagger beneath life's crosses. What a mistaken, what a tragic attitude to sustain toward our heavenly Father! God does not want to keep us at a distance from him. He invites us to come into the closest fellowship with him, to open our hearts fully to him, to regard him as our best friend, and to lay our crosses at his feet. O weary pilgrim, staggering on

life's rugged pathway beneath some heavy cross, learn the great secret of drawing near to God. Once learn this secret, and all crosses will seem light.

There is a fable which tells us how the birds received their wings. They had no wings when they were first created. Then God made wings for them and placing them before the wingless birds, said, "Come, take up these burdens and bear them." At first the birds hesitated, but after a time they laid the wings on their shoulders to carry them. At first the load seemed heavy, but as they went on carrying these burdens the wings grew fast to their bodies, and they learned to fly. The burdens became wings which enabled them to soar toward the blue dome above. Only a fable, but for us it is a parable. Our crosses are the wings which God has ordained to lift us and carry us heavenward. If we accept these crosses in a spirit of sweet resignation, they will not drag us down toward the sordid earth but will carry us onward and upward toward the goal of perfected character, toward the loving heart of God, toward life's richest experiences, even toward the life eternal and beautiful.

Again, this hymn declares that amid lonely

hours our prayer should be, "Nearer, my God, to thee." This thought is clearly expressed in the following lines:

Though like the wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee.

In all probability Mrs. Adams had Jacob's journey and vision in mind when she wrote this hymn. Jacob was a wanderer. His brother Esau sought to kill him, and he fled. Night overtook him in the wilderness. As the darkness deepened he gathered a few stones for a pillow and lay down to sleep. As he slept he dreamed a most wonderful dream, seeing God and his angels. This scene is pictured graphically in the second stanza of this hymn.

How suggestive this scene is of the experiences which come to us at times on our earthly pilgrimage! Did you ever feel as if you were absolutely alone? Has the solitude been so oppressive that you could almost feel it? Have you ever felt like the wanderer overtaken by the darkness of dismal night? Have you ever felt so lonely that God himself scarce

seemed to be there? Ah, yes, these experiences come to us all sooner or later. These hours are sacred hours, and usually none but God and ourselves know of them. Listen, O frail child of the dust! In these lonely hours what you need more than all else besides is to pray, "Nearer, my God, to thee." The author of this hymn, bereaved of father, mother, and sister, breathed this prayer in the midst of her solitude, and God drew near to her.

Bishop Marvin was wandering one day during the Civil War in the wilds of Arkansas. He was lonely and depressed; for he had been driven from his home by the soldiers. As he approached a dilapidated old log cabin he heard a voice within singing, "Nearer, my God, to thee." He entered the cabin and found an aged widow singing in the midst of poverty such as he never saw before. This scene was God's messenger to the good bishop. His despondence vanished and he continued his journey with renewed faith and courage. This hymn has come as God's sweet messenger to untold thousands of lonely hearts, bringing to them hope, comfort, courage and inspiration.

Let us remember that amid lonely hours

we need never be alone. Stephen in his address speaks of Joseph's being sold into slavery, and then adds these highly suggestive words: "But God was with him." So, amid our lonely experiences in life it is possible for us to have God with us in just as real a sense as he was with Joseph, who was a slave and alone in a foreign land.

I have read of an invalid who became very despondent. She confessed to a friend that she felt absolutely alone in life, and that she was utterly forsaken. The friend called again in a few days and placed a motto on the wall at the foot of the invalid's bed. The motto was brief, only three words—"But Thou remainest." This motto burned its way into the heart of the invalid and brought comfort and peace into that lonely chamber.

Human friends may fail us and leave us alone. Even a father or a mother may forsake us. Yea, every earthly tie may break—"But Thou remainest." "There is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother."

It has been said that "Solitude is the audience chamber of God." F. W. Robertson wrote, "The soul is thrown, in the grandeur of a sublime solitariness, on God." Emerson speaks of sailing the sea alone with God.

Moses was prepared by years of solitude with God for his great lifework. Jesus Christ, alone with the Father, was strengthened to drink the bitter cup. In their lonely hours multitudes of God's heroic children have solved great problems, fought stern battles, achieved signal victories, formed sublime purposes, resisted fiery temptations, renewed their strength, and submitted graciously to terrible sorrows. Out of solitude they have come forth erect, strong, brave, gentle, and have become God's heroes and heroines in this workaday world.

In solitude, on wings of prayer
My soul ascends before the throne;
My only hope of help is where
My heart the Father meets alone.

This hymn teaches us once more that amid life's changing scenes our prayer should be "Nearer, my God, to thee."

There let the way appear
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee.

"All that thou sendest me." How these words suggest the vicissitudes of life! Prosperity

and adversity, sunshine and shadow, joy and sorrow, rest and toil, hope and disappointment, trust and fears, smiles and tears—such is the program of earth. Dr. Hillis well has said: "Ours is a world that moves from light to dark, from heat to cold, from summer to winter. On the crest to-day, the hero is in the trough to-morrow. During man's years, and brief, he experiences many reverses. He journeys from strength to invalidism, from prosperity to adversity, from joy to sorrow, or goes from misery to happiness, from defeat to victory." The Empress Catherine II of Russia exclaimed: "Alas, I am but an accumulation of broken ends!" Amiel, in his journal, records, "Life is a mass of beginnings and endings." Herbert Spencer refers to life as "a definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive."

Now, amid these changes which constitute our program we should daily pray, "Nearer, my God, to thee." Jacob was passing rapidly from one scene to another. One hour he stands in the presence of his aged father and receives his blessing. The next he is bidding farewell to loved ones and friends. The next he is fleeing for his life. The next he is sleeping in the wilderness, his head pillowed on

stones. The next he is dreaming. As he dreams he sees a golden ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with bright angels ascending and descending.

For each of us the successive changes in life may become so many golden "steps unto heaven." Amid earthly vicissitudes, if we look up with unquestioned faith in God, we may see his angels beckoning us to draw near his great, tender, loving heart. Somebody has said that "life depends on its altitude rather than on its length." How true this is! If life is a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, from the temporal to the eternal, from the mortal to the immortal, from the heart of man to the heart of God, then the life that now is is truly worth living.

Is life worth living? Yea, to him that lives;
Whose soul hath caught the music of the spheres;
Who, o'er all earth-jars, heavenly music hears,
And to attune his life thereunto strives.

There is a picture named "The Angel of Consolation." A woman sits on the rocks and gazes seaward. The picture is one of utter desolation—only sand, rocks, breaking waves, and a lonely woman. Her face shows grief and despair. The artist has placed just above

her bowed form a white-robed angel, playing upon a harp of gold. But the mourner does not look up to see the angel nor does she hear the celestial music. As we look upon the picture we feel like exclaiming: "Why not look up? Why not listen to the heavenly music?" This picture suggests the attitude of many people in this life. Amid unexpected changes, involving burden-bearing, hardships, and griefs, they refuse to lift their eyes above the sordid earth to behold the golden ladder reaching to heaven, to see the angels beckoning them to draw near to God, and to hear the sweet music of the eternal spheres. O child of God, amid these changes, look up, and your earthly way will appear "steps unto heaven"; look up, and you will recognize that all which your Father sends is "in mercy given"; look up, and you will see the angelic messengers beckoning you to draw near the great white throne. Let us make the prayer of Henry F. Lyte our sincere prayer:

> "Change and decay in all around I see;
> O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!"

Turning to this hymn once more, I find it teaching that amid heart-breaking sorrows our prayer should be, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee.

Already we have seen that the author of this hymn knew what sorrow means. She drank deeply of the cup of human woe. So these words from her pen are not empty or meaningless words. They express the longing and aspiration of a bleeding heart. The lesson is as clear as it is beautiful. Amid thy woes imitate the example of the author as she prays to nestle upon the bosom of the Infinite.

At the battle of Fort Donelson a soldier boy had an arm shot off. While his life slowly ebbed away he lifted his voice and sang, "Nearer, my God, to thee," until death hushed his voice. As our lamented McKinley lay dying in Buffalo he repeated very faintly, "Nearer, my God, to thee." On the day of his funeral in Canton, Ohio, many thousands of people in every State and territory of our Union sang this immortal hymn at memorial services in honor of the martyred president. When the last faint hope had expired in the hearts of more than fifteen hundred on board the huge Titanic, and even as she plunged beneath the icy waters, eight musicians—six

Englishmen, a German, and a Frenchman—played Mrs. Adams' great hymn, "Nearer, my God, to thee." It was indeed a fitting requiem for that helpless company who were ushered with such startling suddenness before the great Judge of all men. Yes, this great hymn has comforted multitudes as they have been engulfed by sorrows, as their hearts have been wrung by woes, as they have passed down into the valley and the shadow, as they have stood by open graves, as they have faced the tragedies and mysteries of life.

W. L. Watkinson well says: "We know that the richest civilization arises out of a bitter struggle with painful conditions; noblest character is the product of sanctified tribulation. Jacob was a poor creature until his thigh was put out; only when he ceased to look like a king did he become one; Paul until he knew the thorn in the flesh knew not the full grace of his Master. When Dante entered Purgatory he was first girded with a willow plucked from the waters of affliction, to teach, says Ruskin, that glory begins in suffering and all power in humility. Mind, then, that you bless God for disadvantage and tribulation." The blind Milton, imbued with the spirit of this hymn, wrote, "I argue not against

heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer right onward." The soul clinging trustfully to God finds a Bethel in the very midst of "stony griefs," and every woe binds him closer to the heart of infinite love.

In the Church of Saint Nicholas, in Amsterdam, there is a wonderful chime of bells. If you go into the tower of the church you will see a man with wooden gloves on his hands pounding on a keyboard. As you listen you hear nothing but the clanging of the keys and the harsh, deafening noise of the bells over your head. To you, standing there, the chimes have no harmony or meaning whatever. But go out into the city several blocks from the church, and there will float out to you the most entrancing music. Even so, as we stand in the presence of stony griefs and bitter woes they seem to have no meaning whatever. They seem harsh, cruel, inexplicable. But in the after years in the midst of the paradise of God, as we stand removed from these jangling noises of earth, they will have an entirely new meaning. We shall see then that the omniscient hand of the loving Father was producing sweet and harmonious music in our lives and we knew it not. Until that day when

faith shall be lost in sight, until we shall see face to face, may our daily prayer be, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

Finally, this hymn tells us that at the close of our earthly pilgrimage our prayer should be, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

> Or if, on joyful wing
> Cleaving the sky,
> Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
> Upward I fly,
> Still all my song shall be,
> Nearer, my God, to thee.

What a sublime picture this is of the soul freed from its earthly tabernacle, and winging its flight to yonder eternal city. As the eagle, freed from its cage, cleaves the sky and wings its flight to some lofty mountain peak, so the freed soul of God's ransomed child wings its flight to the very bosom of Infinite Love.

This stanza suggests Seagrave's old hymn which was loved so dearly by our fathers:

> Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
> Thy better portion trace;
> Rise from transitory things
> Toward heaven, thy native place:
> Sun and moon and stars decay;
> Time shall soon this earth remove;
> Rise, my soul, and haste away
> To seats prepared above.

In this prepared home the crosses of earth will be supplanted by the radiant crown of heaven, the lonely hours of earth will be superseded by fellowship with the redeemed and the angels; the changes of earth will give place to the unchanging and unfading glories of heaven; the sorrows of earth will be forgotten amid celestial joys; the jarring noises of earth will be succeeded by the songs of the ransomed; the thirst of earth will be eternally quenched at the fountain of living water; the tears of earth will be wiped away by the hand divine; the many limitations of earth will be no more, and boundless opportunities for growth will be before us. "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." "I, John, saw the holy city." "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God." What a city that will be! What a city! Cling close to God during thine earthly life, and some sweet day your released soul will cleave the sky and you will enter in at the golden portal of that city whose builder and maker is God.

Mozart spent weeks of labor on his last song. After he had finished it he fell asleep. His daughter entering the room awakened him.

"Come here, my Emilie," he said, "my task is done. The requiem, my requiem, is finished."

The daughter replied: "Say not so, my father. You must soon be better. Even now your cheek has a glow upon it."

"Do not deceive yourself, my child," replied the dying man. "This wasted form can never be restored. Take these notes, these last notes, sit down by my piano, and sing them. Let me hear once more those tones which have been so long my joy and my solace."

Emilie acceded to his request, and in tenderest tone sang the sweet requiem her father had composed. Turning to him at the close, she saw the pallor of death on his countenance. His spirit had flown to God on the wings of his own immortal song.

May we in this passing world live so purely, so unselfishly, so heroically, that we may at the end find comfort and inspiration in the songs of Zion. In that hour may we be able to exclaim,

"Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee."

CHAPTER VI

MAJESTIC SWEETNESS

MAJESTIC SWEETNESS

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
  Upon the Saviour's brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
  His lips with grace o'erflow.

No mortal can with him compare,
  Among the sons of men;
Fairer is he than all the fair
  That fill the heavenly train.

He saw me plunged in deep distress,
  He flew to my relief;
For me he bore the shameful cross,
  And carried all my grief.

To him I owe my life and breath,
  And all the joys I have;
He makes me triumph over death,
  He saves me from the grave.

To heaven, the place of his abode,
  He brings my weary feet,
Shows me the glories of my God,
  And makes my joy complete.

Since from his bounty I receive
  Such proofs of love divine,
Had I a thousand hearts to give,
  Lord, they should all be thine.

—*Samuel Stennett.*

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow."

CHAPTER VI

MAJESTIC SWEETNESS

THIS is one of the greatest hymns ever written to express the moral beauty and matchless love of the Christ. The author, the Rev. Samuel Stennett, was born in Exeter, England, in 1727. When he was ten years of age his father became pastor of the Little Wuld Street Baptist Church in London. Young Stennett united with this church, and when he was thirty-one years of age he succeeded his father as pastor, and held this pastorate for thirty-seven years, only relinquishing it when the angel of death summoned him to his eternal home, August 24, 1795. He was a scholar of great ability, and his writings are characterized by clearness, force, and beauty. He was an intimate friend of George III, the reigning king during the Revolution in the American colonies. He was a man of marked humility and refused all offers of advancement to higher places.

Stennett was the author of about thirty-nine

hymns. Our present hymnal contains three of them, while our preceding hymnal contained seven. Only two of his hymns have assumed prominence as general favorites, namely—"On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand" and the hymn under discussion. "Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned," written over one hundred and twenty-five years ago, has stood the severe test of time. This is one of the comparatively few hymns which will live as long as the militant church goes singing on her way to God. Methinks when we gather before the great white throne we shall sing,

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow."

The hymn as originally written by Stennett had nine stanzas. He named this hymn, "Chief Among Ten Thousand, or the Excellencies of Christ." We all admit that the hymn is well named because it does represent Christ as the most beautiful character which this sinful world has ever known.

I will not attempt to name all the lessons suggested by this hymn, for some of these great lessons have already been noted in the discussion of other hymns. We find three great conceptions in this hymn of Stennett's

which are vitally related to every Christian life as well as to every person to whom the message of Christianity comes.

In this hymn we behold the moral and spiritual beauty of Jesus.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow.

No mortal can with him compare
Among the sons of men;
Fairer is he than all the fair
That fill the heavenly train.

In all hymnology there is no better conception of the moral beauty of Jesus than this. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." The prophet was here referring to the bodily appearance of Jesus. This passage does not mean that Christ was to be positively homely or ugly in appearance, but that there would be nothing especially striking about his bodily presence which would attract people to him. Great artists have vied with each other in attempting to give us an impression of the Christ face. There are traditions which describe his bodily appearance, but we cannot

say with definiteness how he looked, and it is well that it is even so.

It is not physical beauty, which is only skin-deep, that counts, but moral beauty. Is purity beautiful? Is nobility beautiful? Is courage beautiful? Is self-sacrifice beautiful? Is simplicity beautiful? Is sheer goodness beautiful? Is utter devotion to man beautiful? If so Jesus Christ is the most beautiful person who ever walked this earth.

How shall we describe the moral beauty of that life of lives? How shall we characterize its spotless purity? How shall we paint its matchless splendor? His character is purer than the distilled dewdrop and the falling snowflake. It is more transparent than light, for he is "the light of the world." It is more radiant than the sun, for he is the "sun of righteousness." It is brighter than the stars flashing in the heavens, for he is "the bright and morning star." It is more gentle and innocent than the lamb, for he is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." It is more lovely and fragrant than the rose, for he is the "rose of Sharon." It is clearer than the limpid waters of a fountain, for he is the fountain opened in the house of David. It is fairer than the lily kissed by a

sunbeam, for he is the whitest lily in earth's dark valleys.

A part of the message of the angel to the Virgin Mary was, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." More than thirty years after this Holy Man had completed his earthly ministry, the apostle Peter wrote: "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." "Who did no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth." Paul declares that Christ was tempted in all points as we are, and then adds the significant words, "yet without sin." Judas, conscious of the moral sublimity of Christ's character, exclaimed, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." After a careful examination of the Christ, Pilate said to the Jews, "I find no fault in this man." Christ himself, fully conscious of his own purity, asked the penetrating question, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

To every age and to every person Christ has renewed the challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" And all who have examined his life have been compelled to respond with Pilate, "I find no fault in this man."

The enemies of Christianity in all ages, the atheist, the agnostic, the skeptic, the infidel, the worldling, the vicious, the profligate—yea, all classes—have been compelled to admit the moral grandeur of his life. The people in Christ's day noted the hypocrisy, the insincerity, the formalism, the selfishness, and the many imperfections of their religious teachers. So, when they discovered the purity, the sincerity, the spirituality, the unselfishness, and the perfection of Christ's life they were attracted strangely and wonderfully to him.

Noted men throughout the ages in every walk of life have acknowledged freely the great beauty in Christ's life. Listen as I summon a few of these witnesses. Renan: "In Jesus is condensed all that is good and exalted in our nature." Flavel: "Eternity cannot unfold him." Thomas Paine: "The morality that he preached has not been exceeded by any." Robert G. Ingersoll: "With Renan, I believe Christ was the only perfect man." Thomas Carlyle: "The highest voice ever heard on this earth said withal, 'Consider the lilies.' " Matthew Arnold: "No other conception of righteousness will do except Christ's conception of it." Rousseau: "If the life and death of Socrates were those of a philosopher,

the life and death of Jesus were those of a God." Benjamin Franklin: "I think that the system of morals that he taught and his religion . . . are the best that this world ever saw, or is likely to see." Napoleon Bonaparte: "Between him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison; he is truly a being by himself." W. L. Watkinson: "He surprised the world with a goodness altogether divine. The highest thing that men or angels know is purity of heart revealing itself in beauty of character, and in this crowning glory Christ stood alone—without flaw, speck, or stain." Henry van Dyke: "The one ideal that is pure and permanent and satisfying, the one ideal that actually has had power to keep itself alive and prove itself victorious over the disintegrating forces of sin and death, is the ideal in Jesus Christ." Such tributes as I have given could be indefinitely multiplied, but we need no further witnesses. Countless thousands in every age of the Christian era have felt like Fichte when he predicted that "till the end of time all the sensible will bow before this Jesus of Nazareth, and all will humbly acknowledge the exceeding glory of this great phenomenon."

Xerxes was noted for marvelous beauty and

noble stature. Cleopatra of Egypt was so beautiful that noble Romans like Pompey, Julius Cæsar, Augustus, and Antony were captivated completely by her. Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, was distinguished for her rare beauty. Aspasia was exceedingly lovely, and fascinated Cyrus the Younger, and afterward the great Artaxerxes. Phryne and Lais were so very beautiful that it is said they "bewitched all Greece." But there is one who is far more beautiful than all the sons and daughters of men—the man Christ Jesus. His beauty is not a passing, transient, superficial, facial beauty, but the beauty of character, soul beauty. Flowers are beautiful, but they perish in a night. Birds are beautiful, but their life is brief. Youth may have the beauty of an Apollo, but Father Time will surely destroy it and turn it to ashes. But soul beauty will abide when solid land and heavy seas shall chafe no more. Such beauty will shine with increasing splendor while the ages roll. Such is the beauty of Christ's life. The more carefully we study it, its matchless beauty appeals to us the more.

When the tourist enters Yosemite Valley he is profoundly impressed by each of the wonders which present themselves to his eager

vision. There on the north side of the valley looms up El Capitán, thirty-three hundred feet high. Almost opposite are the beautiful Bridal Veil Falls and the Cathedral Rocks. Passing up the valley, he sees the Three Brothers and the Sentinel Rock. Nearly opposite the latter are the wonderful Yosemite Falls, taking a vertical leap of nearly fifteen hundred feet, then a descent of six hundred and twenty-six feet in a series of cascades, and then a final plunge of four hundred feet. Then, advancing up the valley, he comes to North Dome, Sentinel Dome, and Half Dome—all aspiring to reach the blue dome of God's temple above. Then come Mirror Lake, Vernal Falls, and Nevada Falls. All these separate sights are entrancing, but the full glory of the matchless valley does not fully dawn upon him until after he has completed the ascent of the winding and difficult Glacier Trail. Standing on Glacier Point, nearly five thousand feet above the valley, he secures a magnificent view of nearly the entire region. It is in these priceless moments that the real glory and beauty of that marvel of God's handiwork break upon his vision. This is all suggestive of what it really means carefully and prayerfully to study Christ's life.

We discover the excellencies in that character one at a time. Virtue after virtue, glory after glory, beauty after beauty dawn upon our eager vision. We become enraptured by this divine Lover of our souls. His moral beauty grows upon us. His exquisite loveliness charms us. But there will come a time when, before the great white throne, we shall have a clear and unobstructed vision of the whole Christ. All his virtues, his beauties, his attractions will be blended into one harmonious whole, and, falling at his pierced feet, we shall cry out with rapture, "My Lord and my God!"

O Christ, thou art the holiest among the holy! Thou art surpassing beautiful among the sons of men! Thou alone art sinless among sinful men! Thou art the guileless "Lamb of God"! Thou art the "Rose of Sharon"! Thou art the "Lily of the valleys" of earth! Thou art the "bright and morning star"! Thou art the "dayspring from on high"! Thou art the "desire of all nations"! Thou art the "Prince of the kings of the earth"! Thou art the "Wonderful, the Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father"! Thou art the one "altogether lovely"! Thou art the "chiefest among ten thousand"! "Majestic

sweetness sits enthroned upon thy brow"! Thy head is crowned with "radiant glories"! Thy "lips with grace o'erflow"! Thou art fairest of "all the fair that fill the heavenly train"!

Again, we turn to Stennett's hymn and we behold the marvelous sacrificial love of the Christ for sinful man.

> He saw me plunged in deep distress,
> He flew to my relief,
> For me he bore the shameful cross,
> And carried all my grief.

Stennett here gives us a picture of a man hopelessly involved in the cruel meshes of sin. He struggles—but in vain—to free himself. At the supreme moment of his utter helplessness the Christ hastens to deliver him.

King Victor Emmanuel and Queen Helena visited Messina soon after the terrible earthquake. They both joined the rescue party and identified themselves with the people in their sufferings. They ministered to them lovingly, tenderly, and unsparingly. Their presence proved a great inspiration to the stricken people, and when they left they were virtually carried to the steamer in the arms of their devoted subjects.

How suggestive this beautiful incident is

of a greater king—the King of kings—who came to this sinful world and freely identified himself with the woes and sufferings of humanity! What prompted such divine condescension, stupendous sacrifice, and unsparing devotion to sinful humanity? There is only one answer. It was supreme love that inspired this greatest of all sacrifices—the sacrifice of the Christ for the redemption of a wrecked race. When the beloved John would explain the great motive power that inspired the sacrifice of the Redeemer on Calvary, he exclaimed: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Put the emphasis upon those two words—"so loved." God's love for this sinful, weary, and suffering world was so great, so mighty, so tender, so sincere, and so overwhelming that he sacrificed that which was dearest to his own heart—"his only begotten Son." Christ's love was equally great, tender, strong, and led him to bear "the shameful cross" and to carry all our grief.

His ministry among men was preeminently a ministry of sacrifice. He had not where to lay his head. He was tempted in all points like as we are. He was maligned, misunderstood, ridiculed, and persecuted. He was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sor-

rows and acquainted with grief." His back was lacerated by the cruel scourge; his brow was pierced by the crown of thorns; his body was racked by the most exquisite torture on the cross. Surely, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." This amazing sacrifice culminated when, languishing on the cross, he uttered the agonizing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There was only one thing which could have inspired such a sacrifice as this, and that one thing is the greatest thing in the world—love.

O 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love!
The love of God to me;
It brought my Saviour from above,
To die on Calvary.

Princess Alice was one of the most beautiful characters that England has ever known. Her little son was dangerously ill of diphtheria, and the mother had been cautioned not to inhale the poisonous breath. Standing by his bed, she laid her hand gently upon his fevered brow. The child opened his eyes, looked steadily at his mother, reached his little arms out pleadingly toward her and whispered,

"Mamma, kiss me!" A mother's overwhelming love then asserted itself and, disregarding the warnings of the physicians, she stooped and pressed her lips passionately to the child's. The result was the death of lovely Princess Alice. How such an exhibition of a mother's love thrills the human heart!

But I can tell you of a more thrilling story than this. It is the old, old story, the sweetest story ever told by angels or by mortal lips. It is the story of the Son of God who stooped from heaven to earth to imprint a kiss of love, of compassion, and of forgiveness upon poor, sinful, and suffering humanity. He stooped to clasp sinful man to his loving heart and to say to him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace and sin no more." He stooped to be "made sin for us who knew no sin." He stooped to take man by the hand and lead him into sweet fellowship with the Father. He stooped and assumed "the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men." This voluntary humiliation cost him sorrow, suffering, rejection, and death. O such wondrous condescension! O such utter humiliation! O such complete renunciation! O such overwhelming love! Charles Wesley's hymn entitled "Transcendent Love" expresses

this central truth of Christianity in a striking manner:

O Love divine, what hast thou done?
The incarnate God hath died for me!
The Father's co-eternal Son
Bore all my sins upon the tree!
The Son of God for me hath died:
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.

Stennett's hymn suggests that, in view of the matchless love of Christ for us, we should give him the supreme love of our hearts:

Since from his bounty I receive
Such proofs of love divine,
Had I a thousand hearts to give,
Lord, they should all be thine.

As the author thinks of the surpassing love of Jesus and of his great voluntary sacrifice, he feels that if he had a thousand hearts instead of one, he would gladly give them all to the crucified Lord. This is the very type of love that God demands, and he has a right to demand it. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." "He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." These words teach us that our love

should mount as on eagle's wings and center itself supremely in Christ.

But true love is not a mere sentiment. It is the greatest force in the universe. Jesus understood this and said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." We can put the thought of Jesus in other words as follows: "If you love me, you will show your love by sacrificing ease and self in a continual effort to serve your fellows." Paul expressed what his love for Christ meant when he wrote, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." The compulsive power of real love is beyond description. "No abandoned boy in the city, no red man in the mountains, no Negro in Africa can resist its sweet solicitude. It undermines like a wave, it rends like an earthquake, it melts like a fire, it inspires like music, it binds like a chain, it detains like a good story, it cheers like a sunbeam."

Yonder at a wharf in New York a vessel is about to clear for the dark continent of Africa. Standing near the gangplank is a young woman saying the farewell words to her father and mother. She is a refined and educated woman. She has had an excellent preparation for efficient service. Her home life has been sweet, delightful, and peaceful. Her parents

are devoted completely to her, and their chief joy has been to make her life happy. She has had all the human heart could wish. But now she is about to say farewell and to give her loved ones the parting kiss. She is now to leave her beautiful home, her parents, her friends, and all the endearments of her native land. She turns her face toward heathenism and the perishing millions; toward toils, dangers, sacrifices, the dreaded African fever, and a possible speedy death. Yet she is not compelled to go. Neither has any person asked or urged her to go. She freely volunteered to go and requested the missionary board to send her. She does not regard her departure as an unreasonable sacrifice or a calamity. With a firm faith and a joyous heart she faces this great and difficult task. I pause and ask, "Whence the secret of her willingness to make a sacrifice like this?" One day in her girlhood days she had a vision of the crucified Lord. This vision of the marvelous love of Christ overwhelmed her and completely conquered her young heart. Falling at his feet, she cried out, "My Lord and my God!" She learned to love him more than all else beside and to behold in him the one "altogether lovely" and the "chiefest among

ten thousand." There came a day when the divine Christ whispered to her and said, "My child, I desire that thou shouldst carry the message of salvation to those who sit in darkness." Then her love for her Master took wings and mounted above all earthly loves, and she exclaimed, "Here am I, send me!" This was the great inspiring power which led her to surrender all and to give her thought, her time, her strength, her talent, her very life for human need.

Do you not hear God's call to you in what I have just been saying? You are summoned by your Master to express your love for him by keeping his commandments; by speaking kind words; by performing Christlike deeds; by sacrificing self for humanity's sake; by making this world a little more like heaven because you have lived in it. This is God's call to you. May your love for him be equal to the call. When Robert McAll began his work in Paris he knew just two sentences in French: "God loves you," and "I love you." He spoke these short sentences to the people as he met them on the street. With these two sentences he broke hundreds of hearts into submission to God's will, and established a work which will never die.

O Love, thou art the matchless queen of all the graces! Thou art more eloquent than the silvery tongues of enchanting orators! Thou art patient, kind, generous, humble, courteous, unselfish, sweet-spirited, guileless, and sincere! Thou dost never fail amid the crises of life! Thou art not overwhelmed by the adversities of life! Thou art not crushed to earth by the burdens of life! Thou art not destroyed by the separations of life! Thou art not defeated by the barriers of life! Thou art the "religion of humanity"! Thou art the crown of all earthly bliss! Thou art the "fulfilling of the law" of God! Thou art the paradise of earthly dreams! Thou art the sweetest story ever told! Thou art the harmony of the human soul! Thou art the ripest fruit of a noble life! Thou art the great musician making melody on human heart-strings! Thou art the master-key that unlocks the innermost recesses of the human heart! Thou art the way that leads to God! Thou art that sweet angel at whose sacred touch home life is made an Eden of delight! Thou art the great panacea for all the ills and wrongs, the cares and sorrows of humanity! Thou art heaven upon earth!

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us

from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER VII

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
O how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free:
How sweet would be their children's fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

Faith of our fathers! we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife:
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life:
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

—*Frederick W. Faber.*

"Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword."

CHAPTER VII

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

This is a vigorous hymn. The dominant note is fidelity. The spirit of the hymn is sacrificial. It suggests Christian service, spiritual courage, and unconquerable zeal. The whole hymn is in accord with the temperament of the author. He was built on the Peter plan. He was ardent, impulsive, and aggressive. Of all the hymns which Frederick William Faber wrote, this hymn probably is most expressive of the man himself.

He was of Huguenot origin and inherited the fearless, devoted, self-sacrificing spirit of the Huguenots. He was born in Yorkshire, England, June 28, 1814, where his grandfather, the Rev. Thomas Faber, was then vicar. The boy showed a decided fondness for study, which was cultivated carefully throughout his youth and early manhood. In 1839 Faber was ordained in the Church of England and then spent the following four years in travel. In 1843 he became rector at Elton, where he

displayed great earnestness and achieved signal success. The place was noted for its gross intemperance and immorality, but Faber succeeded in effecting a moral revolution. His preaching was attractive, his zeal was boundless, and he seemed to draw the community to himself.

In 1845 John Henry Newman left the Anglican communion and entered the Church of Rome. For years Faber had been an intense admirer of Newman and unconsciously made him his ideal. One writer declares that Faber "was drawn by the evident poetry and scholarship of Newman, as the metal is drawn by the magnet." So powerful was the influence of Newman over Faber that Faber resigned his pastorate in less than a month after Newman entered the Roman Church and followed him at once into that communion. Faber labored in the Church of Rome until his death, September 26, 1863.

Faber wrote many hymns. A book, containing one hundred and fifty of them, was published in 1861. Twelve of his hymns are found in our hymnal. Among his most popular are the following: "The Land Beyond the Sea," "O Paradise! O Paradise!" "O It Is Hard to Work for God," "Hark, Hark, My

Soul!" "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy," and "O How the Thought of God Attracts!"

"Faith of Our Fathers!" is regarded by many as Faber's most popular hymn. It is certainly a great hymn, and has been for many years a favorite with multitudes of people throughout Christendom. Faber emphasizes three great conceptions to which I invite your attention.

He sings of the sacrifices, the sufferings, and the martyrdom of those who have made the history of the Christian Church as glorious as it is imperishable. This is suggested clearly in the following lines:

> Faith of our fathers! living still
> In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword.
>
> Our fathers chained in prisons dark.

As Faber wrote these words I believe he thought of all those heroes and heroines in the church who had suffered and died because of their faith. He had a vision of the tragic death of the apostles, of the martyrs of the first three centuries, of the noble Christian men and women who were tortured and slain by the Spanish Inquisition, and of the disciples of our Lord slain during the Reformation period. Especially did he think of the massacre of his

ancestors, the Huguenots in France, seventy thousand of whom perished within a few hours. This is the picture which he saw when he wrote this immortal hymn.

How terrible is the story of the persecutions in the history of the Christian Church! The oratory of man has never been able to describe it justly, the artist's brush but faintly has pictured it, the pen of the historian inadequately has presented it. In these persecutions the Christians were subjected to every conceivable kind of torture and death. The sword, the fire, the cross, wild beasts, hooks of steel, the rack, red-hot irons, and the wheel were among the methods employed to produce excruciating pain and cruel death. They were nailed, like their Master, to the cross; they were sent, like Paul, to the gory block; they were burned, like Polycarp, at the stake; they were weighted, like Symphorosa, with stones and cast into the river or sea; they were skinned alive; they were covered with skins of wild beasts and then worried to death by wild dogs; they were smeared with pitch, lashed to poles, and set on fire to serve for nocturnal lights; they were sawn asunder; they were pierced with irons at white heat; they were tied to horses and the limbs torn

from their bodies—but the spirits of these martyrs went home to God.

Eusebius lived in the third century and witnessed the persecution and death of many Christians. In his history of the early church he gives the following testimony: "We ourselves have observed many crowded together in one day, some suffering decapitation, some the torments of flames; so that the murderous weapon was completely blunted, and the executioners themselves, wearied with slaughter, were obliged to relieve one another. Then we were witnesses of the truly divine energy of those that believed in the Christ of God. They received the final sentence of death with gladness and exultation, so far as even to sing and send up hymns of praise and thanksgiving until they breathed their last." Thus does an eyewitness testify to the sublime heroism of the martyrs in the early Christian Church.

The Roman historian of the second century, who was greatly prejudiced against Christianity, wrote as follows concerning the persecution under Nero: "An arrest was made of all who pleaded guilty [of being Christians]; then, upon their information, an immense multitude were convicted. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with

the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burned to serve as a nightly illumination when daylight had expired." This terrible picture portrayed by Tacitus was repeated with variations by ten different Roman emperors during the first three centuries. Hundreds of thousands were sent to a martyr's crown by these ten Roman emperors. Time would fail me to tell of the later persecutions which raged in Spain, France, England, Scotland, and elsewhere. It has been estimated that nearly fifty million people have died as martyrs since the crucifixion of Christ. It was a vision of this holy army which caused Faber to write:

> Faith of our fathers! living still
> In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword.

But that indomitable and bold spirit which fears not martyrdom is by no means dead in the modern church. At the opening of the present century there occurred as striking illustrations of the true martyr spirit as were seen in the early church. In the Boxer Rebellion hundreds of Christian men and women died terrible deaths rather than deny Christ. Miss Luella Miner, in China's Book of Martyrs,

relates some of the most thrilling instances of Christian heroism that this world has ever known. Mrs. Yang and her two little girls were captured by the Boxers and carried to a temple. She was urged to renounce her faith and worship the idols. Upon her prompt refusal she and her helpless children were slain. A Chinese girl was commanded to burn incense to the gods. She refused, saying: "I cannot burn incense, for I believe in Jesus. I am not afraid, even though you kill me, for I shall go straight to my heavenly Father." Hardly had she ceased speaking before the sword descended. One of our preachers, Ch'en Ta-yung, with his wife and two children were hacked to pieces by the infuriated Boxers. The mother's last words were, "We will all go to our heavenly Father together." These incidents suggest the spirit which characterized our Chinese Christians as they met death for Christ's sake.

One of Doré's famous pictures, called "Ad Leones," portrays the martyrs being thrown to the lions in a Roman amphitheater. They are defenseless, surrounded by high walls; they are before multitudes who watch the lions devour the flesh and lick up the blood of these Christians. But the horror of the

picture is relieved by the angels hovering above the bloody scene and bearing the released souls to heaven with crowns and songs of victory.

These martyrs of the Christian Church have passed to their coronation from the arena, the block, the cross, the stake, the dungeon, the chamber of torture, the watery grave, and the missionary field. When John was in the very midst of his wondrous vision he heard the question asked, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" And the answer was, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Thus did John view the martyrs of the preceding ages. If we could only pass through the pearly gates and see as John saw, we should behold a much larger army of martyrs. Their sufferings, their tortures, and their cruel death was the thorny pathway of earth which led to the great white throne of God.

In these days, when we can worship God in our own chosen way with none to make us afraid, when all civilization is in sympathy with Christianity, when the heathen nations are slowly but surely turning to the crucified Christ, when every opportunity for Christian development is afforded us, we should remind ourselves frequently of how this condition of affairs was accomplished. "Lest we forget," I emphasize the debt—the tremendous debt—we owe the martyrs of the Christian Church. They toiled, they suffered, they died for their most sacred convictions, and truly we have entered into the results of their sufferings and labors. Surely, "the blood of the martyrs" has proved to be "the seed of the church," from which have sprung religious toleration and freedom of worship.

Well hath it been said: "Our life is the product of creative forces outside of ourselves. For the poetry that charms us, for the history that instructs us, for the science that enlightens us, for the music that thrills us we are indebted to the patient labor of men and women who have lived in different countries and at different periods of time." In like manner we may assert that the religious freedom of our day, the spiritual heroism being

manifested on our missionary fields, and the self-sacrificing devotion shown in our home church work, are largely the outgrowth of those who have "loved not their lives unto the death." "In spite of dungeon, fire and sword" they have bequeathed to us the rich heritage of a living faith, a heroic spirit, and a free church.

They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane;
They bowed their necks the death to feel:
Who follows in their train?

They climbed the steep ascent of heav'n
Through peril, toil, and pain:
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.

As we continue the study of this hymn we find Faber emphasizing the deep and fervent religious experience of the fathers. The following expressions indicate this: "Faith of our fathers! holy faith!" and "Were still in heart and conscience free." Three leading traits in the experience of the fathers are thus suggested, namely, a profound faith, purity of heart, and a tender conscience void of offense toward God and man.

The faith of the fathers was of a strong,

manly, and rugged type. They showed their faith by their works. They contended earnestly and persistently "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This faith was prized by them more than all else besides. It profoundly affected every phase of their lives. For this faith they labored, they suffered, they endured, they died.

That eminent English chemist Sir Humphry Davy speaks of the Christian faith as follows: "I envy no quality of mind or intellect in others—not genius, power, wit, or fancy; but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing; for it makes life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over the decay, the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights, calling in the most delightful visions where the sensualist and the skeptic view only gloom, decay, and annihilation." This is one of the greatest tributes ever given to the superiority of the Christian faith and fitly expresses what that faith meant to the fathers. Faith to them was more than meat and drink. It was the source of their sterling manhood. It was the great main-

spring of their hope. It was the corner stone of their noble characters. It was the sheet anchor of their holy aspirations. It was their joy by day and their song by night. It was their sweet comfort in repose and their sure support in the storms of persecution. It was their constant inspiration in life and their refuge in death.

A gentleman once asked that man of great faith George Mueller how to cultivate a strong faith. Mueller replied: "The only way to learn strong faith is to endure strong trials. I have learned my faith by standing firm amid severe testings." The "faith of our fathers" was made strong by the severe testings through which they passed. These trials made them veritable giants in the realm of faith. There was an old belief among some of the Indian tribes that the strength of a slain enemy entered into the victor. In the Christian Church the contrary is true, for it would seem as if the faith and heroism of the martyrs really entered into their living companions. The purpose of the persecution was to exterminate the Christian faith, but the more violently persecution raged, the more brightly burned the living flame of faith in the hearts of the fathers.

One of the most conspicuous examples of sublime faith among the fathers in the early church was Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna. He was brought before the proconsul Philip, who said to him, "If you will only swear by Cæsar, and reproach Christ, I will immediately release you."

Polycarp replied: "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and he hath never wronged me. How can I now blaspheme my King, who hath saved me? I am a Christian."

The proconsul said, "I have the beasts, and will expose you to them if you do not yield."

Polycarp replied, "Let them come; it is well to pass from these sufferings to the realms of justice."

"If you have no fear of the beasts," Philip answered, "I will bind you to the stake, and consume you with fire, unless you yield."

"You threaten me," said Polycarp, "with fire, which burns but for a time, and is soon extinguished; but you are ignorant of the future judgment, and of the fire eternal which is reserved for the impious."

It is recorded that Philip was amazed at the sublime faith and great firmness of this man. When the executioners prepared to fasten him to the stake, he said to them calmly:

"Leave me as I am. He who gives me fortitude to endure the fire will enable me to remain in the midst of the flames without being bound." As the flames kindled upon him he offered a prayer of praise and his redeemed spirit passed on to live with the Christ for whom he suffered.

This is a striking illustration of the "Faith of our fathers! holy faith!" Ten thousand times ten thousand of our fathers in the church have passed to a martyr's crown sustained by a faith like that of Polycarp. The apostle John was right when he wrote, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." By faith "our fathers" "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." "They were tortured, not accepting deliverance; had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain; being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Of whom the world was not worthy."

This same faith in our age leads men to leave home, friends, and all that the world counts dear and go to the remotest parts of the earth to declare the glad tidings of the gospel.

It causes the city missionary to climb the rickety stairs into dark garrets to tell the poorest of the poor that they may possess the true riches. It inspires pure women to enter, as the angels of God, the dens of vice and the sinks of iniquity to bring the sweet tidings of redeeming love to the harlot, the outcast, and the debauchee. It causes large numbers of Christian folk throughout the world to toil, to suffer, and sacrifice, to enthrone Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords in the hearts of their fellows.

We have seen already that Faber in this hymn refers not only to the faith of the fathers but also to their purity of heart and tenderness of conscience. I have been discussing faith, which is the dominant note of the hymn. The fathers, having the type of faith which I have indicated, would of necessity have pure hearts and clear consciences. This is the logical result of absolute faith in God. This is why faith is so fundamentally important. It leads to forgiveness, heart purity, an assured conscience, spiritual devotion, holy heroism, and a passion to serve humanity. As we contemplate the "faith of our fathers," may we, each and every one of us, pray sincerely,

"Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste, e'en here, the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home."

Finally, Faber's hymn proclaims how we may perpetuate the "faith of our fathers." This is indicated clearly in the last stanza:

Faith of our fathers! we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife:
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life:
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

To perpetuate the faith of the fathers we must have, like them, a holy faith, a pure heart, a clear conscience, profound conviction, and a willingness to sacrifice ease and self for the kingdom of God.

A Russian painter has made a picture to illustrate one of the early beliefs of his people. There was an old Slav superstition that at the founding of any important public building a human life must be sacrificed if the building was to endure and the business transacted in it was to be prosperous. In this picture the artist portrays the laying of the corner stone of the Kremlin, the noted Russian Capitol. All preparations for placing the great stone

have been made. A large assembly have gathered for the ceremony. In the very center of the picture, making a fierce struggle to escape the terrible fate awaiting her, is a lovely peasant girl, whom a number of hardy workmen are carrying to the spot where her promising life is to be crushed out beneath the massive corner stone. This old Slav superstition is highly suggestive. If our lives are to be truly great, truly prosperous and successful, truly useful, and truly beautiful, it means that the corner stone of our lives must be laid in genuine self-sacrifice.

Carlyle well has said: "It is only with renunciations that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin. . . . In a valiant suffering for others, not in a slothful making others suffer for us, did nobleness ever lie." W. L. Watkinson puts this truth pointedly as follows: "The race is not to be saved by philosophy, government, or example, but by self-denial pushed to its last issues. As the New Testament boldly puts it, we have redemption only through blood." Jesus epitomized the same truth when he said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake . . . the same shall save it."

Any man or woman who has made any contribution to the world's development from any point of view has sacrificed ease, self, and prospective rewards. This is true of the scientist, the philosopher, the inventor, the discoverer, the historian, the poet, the reformer, and of all others who have in any degree made this workaday world richer by their efforts. It is only as virtue goes out of us that we help and serve our fellows. No man can be Christ's disciple if he is self-seeking, self-indulgent, and self-centered. He must grasp the great truth that in this world of affairs he is not "to be ministered unto, but to minister."

We are most like Christ when we sacrifice ourselves most for those in need. "We must consciously, willingly, lovingly serve one another, and serve the world. Self-immolation, which dimly awakes to the knowledge of itself in reflective humanity, realizes itself lucidly and joyously in the light and love and liberty of Christ. 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God.' 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' This was the spirit and language of the Master in the hour of Gethsemane and in the presence of Calvary. We must not rest until we attain to something of the same conscious surrender

and joy. We must not ignorantly and murmuringly carry the cross with Simon, but with Saint Paul, 'glory in the cross.' We must discover, as our Master did, the highest joy of existence in limiting and renouncing ourselves that we may help and save. Our service and sacrifice must be real, individual, intense, entering personally, experimentally, into the world's wants and woes."

When William Mead, one of our missionaries in Angola, Africa, was dying, he asked his wife if she desired to take the children still left on earth home to Vermont to be educated. She replied, "No, I prefer to educate them in the work at the front." Johnnie, about fourteen years of age, made his father's coffin of rough boards. His mother lined it with white cambric and covered it with black cloth. Then she read the funeral service, and laid her husband down to sleep beside Nellie and Samuel. Then this Christian heroine turned away from the fresh grave to take up the work her husband had laid down. This incident is a striking illustration of the truth we have been discussing. It goes to the very heart of the subject. It suggests the spirit which should characterize our lives. Not self-ease, but self-sacrifice; not self-enjoyment, but

self-denial; not self-gratification, but self-immolation; not self-seeking, but self-forgetfulness; not self-centered, but Christ-centered—this is God's ideal for your life and mine. This is Christ's program for his disciples. This is the rugged road the fathers trod. This is what led Faber to write:

> How sweet would be their children's fate,
> If they, like them, could die for thee!

The following, taken from W. J. Bryan's great lecture on "The Prince of Peace," is exceedingly pertinent:

"I can imagine that the early Christians who were carried into the arena to make a spectacle for those more savage than the beasts, were entreated by their doubting companions not to endanger their lives. But, kneeling in the center of the arena, they prayed and sang until they were devoured. How helpless they seemed, and, measured by every human rule, how hopeless was their cause! And yet within a few decades the power which they invoked proved mightier than the legions of the emperor, and the faith in which they died was triumphant over all that land. It is said that those who went to mock at their sufferings returned asking themselves, 'What

is it that can enter into the heart of man and make him die as these die?' They were greater conquerors in their death than they could have been had they purchased life by a surrender of their faith."

What would have been the destiny of the church if the early Christians had had as little faith as many of our Christians now have? On the other hand, if the Christians of to-day had the faith of the martyrs, how long would it be before the fulfillment of the prophecy that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess? Our faith should be even stronger than the faith of those who lived two thousand years ago, for we see the Christian religion spreading and supplanting the philosophies and creeds of the Orient.

May the mantle of the fathers fall on the membership of the church to-day! May the rugged faith of the fathers characterize our lives! May the self-sacrificing spirit of the fathers be emulated by us who face the tasks of this hour! May the spiritual heroism of the fathers mark our conduct on every moral battlefield! Then the end of our earthly journey will be as glorious and triumphant as was theirs.

"Earth for work, heaven for wages; this life

for the battle, another for the crown; time for employment, eternity for enjoyment."

We hear the call; in dreams no more
In selfish ease we lie,
But girded for our Father's work,
Go forth beneath his sky.

Where prophet's word, and martyr's blood,
And prayers of saints were sown,
We, to their labors entering in,
Would reap where they have strown.

O Thou whose call our hearts has stirred,
To do thy will we come;
Thrust in our sickles at thy word,
And bear our harvest home.

CHAPTER VIII

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY!

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY!

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessèd Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see;
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessèd Trinity!

—*Reginald Heber.*

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!"

CHAPTER VIII

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY

A NOTED English student of hymns writes, "Bishop Heber's hymn, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,' is in my judgment the finest hymn ever written, considering the abstract difficult nature of its theme, its perfect spirituality, and the devotion and purity of its language." Tennyson, England's most famous poet laureate, regarded this as the world's greatest hymn.

The author, Reginald Heber, was distinguished in many ways. He was a true poet, an honored bishop of the Church of England, an extensive traveler, a zealous missionary, and a graceful and spiritual hymn writer. He was born at Malpas, Cheshire, April 21, 1783. His father was an English rector and was a man of wealth and learning. During his college days at Oxford, Reginald was known as a brilliant scholar and won a number of prizes. After graduation he be-

came a Fellow of All Souls' College and pursued postgraduate work. He entered holy orders in 1807, and during the following sixteen years rendered faithful and efficient service in several parishes. In January, 1823, he was appointed as Bishop of Calcutta, and in this vast field labored until his death, April 3, 1826.

Heber wrote many hymns, all characterized by real literary merit. Three of his hymns are especially loved and prized by Christian people the world over. The following trinity of hymns will be sung by the militant Church of Christ in all coming time:

From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand.

The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

If Reginald Heber had done nothing else except to compose these three hymns, he did enough for one mortal man. Under the inspiration of these hymns many have gone forth to toil, to sacrifice and to suffer for the purpose of extending the borders of Christ's kingdom.

The title usually given to the hymn we are to discuss is "The Trinity." The only direct reference to the Trinity in the hymn is found in the words, "God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity." It is not my purpose in this hymn message to discuss the Trinity. While this preacher fully believes in the doctrine of the Trinity, he frankly admits that the depth and majesty of the doctrine transcend all human powers of comprehension. A philosophy of the Trinity is apparently impossible. Herein is a great mystery but a clearly revealed truth. While this hymn recognizes the Trinity, the chief emphasis is placed upon God himself.

When considering carefully the scope of these hymn messages, I decided to choose one hymn which had God for its leading theme. I examined all such hymns in many collections and came to the conclusion that this surpassed them all in great conceptions of God. Heber must have had a vision of the Supreme Being before writing this stately hymn. His conception of God as breathed into these lines is as great as it is sublime.

It is fundamentally important that we should have right conceptions of God. Such conceptions will largely determine the type of the religious experience and the character which

we will develop. Some of us remember very distinctly the grotesque conceptions of God which we entertained in our childhood.

John Fiske wrote: "I remember distinctly the conception which I had formed when five years of age. I imagined a narrow office just over the zenith with a tall, standing desk running lengthwise, upon which lay several open ledgers bound in coarse leather. There was no roof over this office, and the walls rose scarcely five feet from the floor, so that a person standing at the desk could look out upon the whole world. There were two persons at the desk, and one of them—a tall, slender man, of aquiline features, wearing spectacles, with a pen in his hand and another behind his ear—was God. The other, whose appearance I do not distinctly recall, was an attendant angel. Both were diligently watching the deeds of men and recording them in the ledgers. To my infant mind this picture was not grotesque but ineffably solemn."

Most of us can recall a somewhat similar picture of the Deity. It is natural for the child to paint God as very human—as a King, a Judge, or a great man. It is comforting to know that we slowly but surely outgrow all such conceptions. It is unfortunate, however,

that many in outgrowing such conceptions, do not form right ideas concerning the character of God and his attitude toward men. Now, this hymn of Heber's gives us a beautiful conception of the character of God and, at the same time, it clearly teaches what God's attitude toward man is.

First of all, this hymn seems to bring us face to face with God. I voice the sentiments of thousands when I say that I never sing this hymn without feeling somehow that I am standing in the immediate presence of the Infinite. It points unerringly to God as the supreme personal fact on earth, and in heaven. It points to his almighty power, his moral and spiritual perfection, his eternal love, and his unfailing mercy. Through every stanza we see the "Lord God Almighty" praised, exalted, and glorified.

The word "God" is of itself very suggestive. Lowell once wrote, "There is more force in names than most men dream of." This is certainly true of the name "God." Among the earliest names of God we find El, Elohim, Elyon, and Shaddai, all which suggest the general notions of God. Jehovah (Hebrew, Yah-weh) was the distinctive name of the God of Israel. "Elohim was used to denote the

God of nature, creation and providence, while Jehovah was used of the God of revelation. So great was the reverence attached to the name of Yah-weh, that it was thought too sacred to be pronounced except during temple worship. Finally it came to be pronounced only by the high priest on the great day of the atonement. Eventually there were substituted for the Yah-weh the words 'Adonai, Elohim,' and a number of paraphrases like 'Heaven,' 'Place,' 'the Name,' 'the Holy One,' 'Blessed is He.' "

The Danish and Swedish name for God is Gude. This term is very suggestive because we cannot think of God without thinking of his great *goodness.* I have read that when the Anglo-Saxons accepted Christianity they sought for a word in their own language which would fitly characterize the Divine Being. They thought of his love, patience, kindness, forgiveness, mercy, and asked, "What name will be best to express these attributes?" Finally they decided to call him "Good"; and hence the name originated which we use today. It is the highly suggestive name "Good" shortened into "God." Sir Walter Raleigh wrote, "God is absolutely good; and so, assuredly, the cause of all that is good." Cowper

exclaimed: "Oh, Thou bounteous giver of all good! Thou art, of all thy gifts, thyself the crown!" Doddridge sweetly sings:

His goodness stands approved,
Unchanged from day to day:
I'll drop my burden at his feet,
And bear a song away.

Ah, yes, you cannot think of good without thinking of God, nor of God without thinking of good. The psalmist expresses this thought as follows: "Good and upright is the Lord." "Thou art good and doest good." When Moses stood on Mount Sinai it is recorded that the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Then Moses "bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped." In like manner has God appeared to man in every age as a God "abundant in goodness." True, man oftentimes has failed or refused to recognize his goodness, but this does not invalidate his goodness in the least. The believing, trustful heart recognizes his goodness and, like Moses of old, bows his head and worships.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;
Thy mercies how tender! how firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

Heber sings of the moral and spiritual perfection of God. Thrice, at the beginning of each stanza, we repeat the words, "Holy, holy, holy," and in the third stanza we find the words, "Perfect in . . . purity." God himself declares, "I, the Lord your God, am holy." The psalmist writes: "The Lord our God is holy." "Let all flesh bless his holy name forever." "Holy and reverend is his name."

One writer of note, speaking of God's perfect work in the physical universe, writes: "If a scrap of the sky had been missed, who would have enameled it? If a bit of the rainbow had been unfinished, who would have colored it? If a single stone had been left unplaced in the mighty fabric, what architect could have supplied one polished after the similitude of the rest of the palace? Such defects would have defied the genius of the race; so far is the work of man inferior to the divine creation." But it is not in nature where we see the highest perfection of Deity, but in the character of God. Many declare that there are numerous

imperfections in nature, but there is not a single defect or flaw in the character of the Infinite.

Moral and spiritual perfection is the crowning glory of the Godhead. Holiness is the supreme beauty of his character. Such a conception led Holmes to write:

> Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
> Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;
> Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
> All, save the clouds of sin, are thine.

Verily, the character of God shines in speckless purity. It is not clouded by sin; it is not stained by guilt; it is not marred by imperfections.

Because God is holy, he would have us be holy. This is his supreme ideal for man. His message to his earthly children is, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." He does not expect absolute holiness on our part. This is impossible in our present environment. But he does expect us to make holiness our crowning ideal in the life that now is. No person who professes to be a child of God can have a lower ideal than this. This was Paul's great ideal, but, after more than twenty years of walking with God, he declares, "Not as though I had al-

ready attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after." Holiness was his great ideal. During his earthly life he never fully reached it, but he followed hard after the ideal until he passed into that eternal environment where holiness of character is perfected. He who reads the life of Heber, the author of this hymn, is profoundly impressed by his striving to reach this great ideal. I admire the way Mark Guy Pearse expresses this truth: "Holiness is not a rapturous triumph away up somewhere in vague heights of glory, steadfast and splendid like a sun. It is just a pure heart that makes room for Jesus." Holiness means separation from sin, complete dedication to God, transformation into Christ's image, and supreme love for the Infinite. This is the eternal Father's ideal for each of his children. May we measure up to the ideal!

Heber sings of the omnipotence of God. This is suggested clearly in the expressions, "Lord God Almighty" and "perfect in power."

Ingersoll, the noted agnostic, was in Henry Ward Beecher's study one day. Beecher had recently been presented with a fine celestial globe, showing the position of many of the heavenly bodies. Ingersoll examined it closely

and was delighted with it. Turning to Beecher, he said, "It's just what I want; who made it?"

"Who made it?" repeated Beecher. "Who made this globe? O, nobody, Colonel; it just happened."

One starlight evening some skeptical French officers on the deck of a vessel were discussing the existence of a God. Finally, turning to Napoleon, who was standing near, they asked, "Is there a God?"

In reply he simply pointed to the stars and asked, "Gentlemen, who made all that?"

These two incidents suggest Heber's words, "Lord God Almighty." Every blade of grass, every unfolding leaf and bud, every stately tree of the forest, every enchanting valley, every towering mountain, every sea and ocean, every planet, moon, satellite, sun, and star, is a visible expression of the omnipotence of God.

"By his continued action he sustains and renews the universal frame. Having created the glory of the world, he dwells within the glory he first created, and so it abides imperishable. The dome of heaven never settles with age, never requires an iron band to support it, like the dome of Saint Peter's in Rome. The mountains need no buttressing; that

grand old organ, the wind, calls for no fresh pipe; the vesture of the summer is unfaded; the snow needs no fuller to whiten it; and, without retouching, the rainbow shines in undimmed splendor. All things continue vital and vivid, because they are upheld by the word of God's power."

Lord Kelvin said: "Science positively affirms creative power. It is not in dead matter that we live and move and have our being, but in the creating and directing power which science compels us to accept as an article of belief. We cannot escape from this conclusion when we study the physics and dynamics of living and dead matter all around." Liebig, the great German chemist, was once asked by Kelvin if he believed that the grass and flowers "grew by mere chemical force." He answered, "No, no more than I could believe that a book of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces." Thus does science support Scripture in asserting the omnipotence of God in this universe. Truly, "of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever." Samuel Mitchell, the eminent American physician and naturalist, wrote: "Who shall reveal to us the true cosmography of the universe?

It is the work of an omnipotent architect. Around us and above us rise sun and system, cluster and universe; and I doubt not that in every region of this vast empire of God, hymns of praise and anthems of glory are rising and reverberating from sun to sun, and from system to system, heard by Omnipotence alone across immensity and through eternity."

But there is another realm in which God's omnipotence is as clearly manifested as in the material universe, and that is the spiritual realm. The conversion of a soul—the new creation of a man in Christ Jesus our Lord—is as great a miracle as the creation of a planet. Begbie's book Twice Born Men contains specific instances of the omnipotence of God as applied to the life of man. There is infinite comfort in this thought for the sinful. Because God is omnipotent—possessing unlimited power—"He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." When in Honolulu I was present at a service which was attended by a number of men from the British cruiser Challenger. The chief writer, the chief gunner, a stoker, a pastry cook, a policeman, and a common seaman all testified to the omnipotent power of God

in saving man from sin. Hear this glorious truth, O mortal man! No matter what your position or environment may be, God's power is entirely sufficient to encompass your needs. He is abundantly able to transform man and make his manhood glorious and imperishable.

There is great comfort also for the Christian. Because God possesses all power he is able to help you to resist temptation, to conquer trials, to bow submissively to sorrow, to stand heroically on this earthly battlefield, to master every unholy passion, to give you victory over death, and to crown you in his heavenly kingdom.

I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord abide with me!

Heber sings of the Fatherhood of God. He declares that the Infinite is merciful and loving; and herein we ascertain two of the great distinguishing features of true fatherhood. The precious doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is not taught in the Old Testament, and is scarcely suggested. The word "Father" as applied to God is found but seven times in the Old Testament. Five times he is spoken of

as the Father of the Hebrew people and twice as the Father of individuals. There is no instance in the Old Testament where God is directly addressed as "Father." It remained for Jesus Christ to give the world this great truth. The Jews had known God as the Self-existent One, the Creator, the great Judge, the Supreme Ruler, the Eternal One, the Lord of Hosts, the Lawgiver, but Jesus transcended all these conceptions and taught the world that God was a merciful and loving Father. So when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray he said, "When ye pray, say, Our Father."

And all who choose may find in God a true Father. His message to every man is: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." This message is more significant than the disquisitions of philosophers; it is more important than the pronouncements of scientists; it is more thrilling than the sweetest song; it is more inspiring than the loftiest poetry; it is more majestic than the edicts of kings and queens.

Fatherhood means mercy; God is "rich in mercy" and "the Father of mercies." Paul declares that "according to his mercy he saved us." Fatherhood means comfort. He is "the God of all comfort," and declares, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Fatherhood means guidance. Our God says, "I will guide thee with mine eye." Fatherhood means kindness. God definitely promises that his "kindness shall not depart" from his children. Fatherhood means provision. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Fatherhood means protection. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Fatherhood means forgiveness. God's declaration is: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Fatherhood means love. "God is love." "God so loved the world." "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Ah, how much the Fatherhood of God means to this weary sinful world! It means all I have indicated and much more.

Well hath it been said, "This little word 'Father,' lisped by faith in prayer, by a real Christian, exceeds the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and all the famous speakers of the world."

An eminent writer gives us this fine conception of God's Fatherhood: "Jesus Christ caused his Father to stand forth in an alluring atmosphere of strength and gentleness, of generosity and magnanimity. Then his throne was clothed with wondrous attraction. . . . To all other alluring and illuminating names Christ added that of Father, a name with that of mother that showers all sweet memories and suggestions upon the human soul. Thereby Christ opened up a heart throbbing within love itself. . . . And Jesus Christ asks the word 'Father' and all the tender and sweet associations of childhood to interpret God unto men."

We find that the Fatherhood of God is a most helpful and comforting truth when applied to the practical aspects of our earthly lives. Because God is our Father he deals mercifully with us; he will comfort us when in sorrow; he will guide us from earth to heaven; he will be kind, tender, and patient in all his dealings with us; he will supply our every

need; he will support us by his strong arm amid the crises of life; he will forgive us when we go astray; he will love us through time and in eternity.

> And as feeble babes that suffer,
> Toss and cry and will not rest,
> Are the ones the tender mother
> Holds the closest, loves the best,
> So when we are weak and wretched,
> By our sins weighed down, distressed,
> Then it is that God's great patience
> Holds us closest, loves us best.

Heber calls upon nature, upon man, upon the redeemed and the angels to praise God.

> Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
>
> All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea.
>
> Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee,
> Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
> Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
> Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

These lines of Heber suggest the psalmist's song of praise: "Praise ye the Lord. . . . Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light. . . . For his name alone is excellent."

Surely, nature praises its Creator. As we reverently study geology, botany, zoology, ichthyology, astronomy, and all the other sciences we behold the clear footprints of the Lord God Almighty. Professor Pierce, of Harvard, wrote, "God is in the intention exhibited in the universe everywhere." Agassiz frequently declared that "all facts of zoology and geology exhibit thought, prescience, forecast." An astronomer, after an exhaustive study of the stars, cried out, "Truly, our God is a great God, for the glory of the heavens and the handiwork of the earth are but his outer garments." N. D. Hillis writes, "The genius of God is such that each red rose, each golden cloud, each perfumed wind, each tropic forest, and each mountain height can only portray one narrow section of God's wisdom and beauty." Another writer sums the whole matter up thus: "There is not an atom that is not vocal with his praise—the minutest grain equally with the mightiest orb, the microscopic cell no less than the most elaborate organism. Creation, from base to final, from center to circumference, throughout all realms, joins in the ceaseless pæan, swelling in cadences which fill immensity and will break forever along the shores of eternity, declarative of his power and

glory." Truly, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Heber was right when he wrote, "All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea."

And every child of God finds his heart and mind in perfect harmony with the spirit of praise which permeates nature. Fully conscious of God's great goodness, he exclaims, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." Angelo, when far advanced in years and blind, groped his way one day into the gallery of the Vatican. As he passed his hand over a marble torso, the work of the great Phidias, he remarked, "Great is this marble; greater still the hand that carved it; greatest of all, the God who fashioned the sculptor." Such is the way God's child feels. With a loving, thankful, and joyous heart he recognizes his God as greatest in nature, greatest in wisdom, greatest in Fatherly kindness, greatest in power, greatest in purity, greatest on earth, greatest in heaven, greatest evermore.

Heber summons not only nature and man to praise God but also the redeemed and the angels. This is well, for some sweet day, if we serve God faithfully here, we shall join

that heavenly throng and with them shall chant the glorious refrain, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is, and is to come. . . . Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things."

What a rapturous song,
When the glorified throng,
  In the spirit of harmony join;
Join all the glad choirs,
Hearts, voices and lyres,
  And the burden is, "Mercy Divine!"

"Hallelujah," they cry,
To the King of the sky,
  To the great everlasting I Am!

A number of years ago, in Jeanesville, Pennsylvania, four miners were buried alive. A rescuing party worked hard for eighteen days before finding the miners. The imprisoned men were sadly emaciated and almost insane. There were three thousand people at the top waiting to receive the rescued men. When, at last, they were brought above the ground, that vast assembly broke forth in singing the long-meter doxology, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." A person present said, "Those old hills of Pennsylvania never before heard such a grand chorus." Ah,

methinks in that great day when God maketh up his jewels in the sweet by and by, and when the rescued and redeemed myriads shall gather before the great white throne, that vast throng will break forth simultaneously into singing:

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!"

CHAPTER IX

ROCK OF AGES

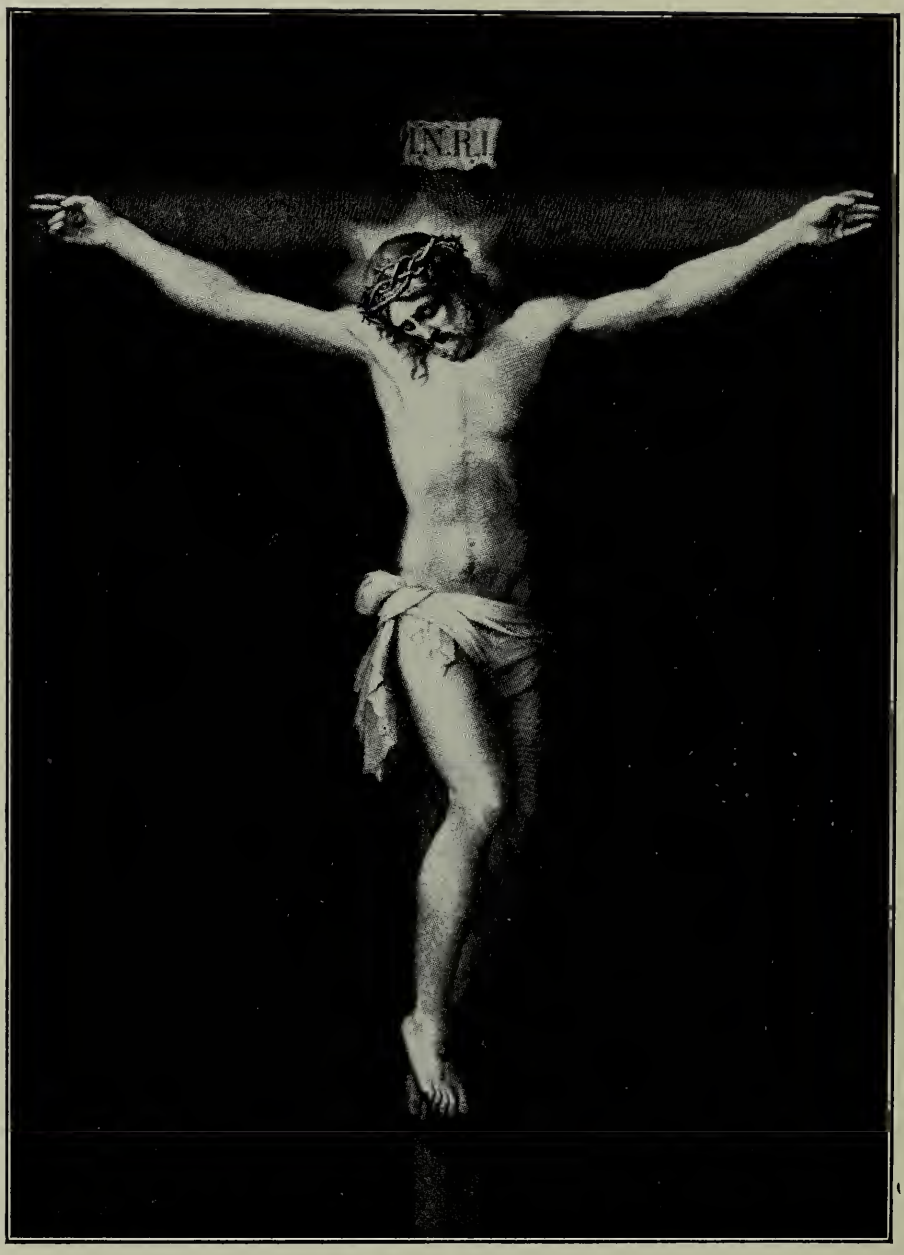
ROCK OF AGES

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone;
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold thee on thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

—*Augustus M. Toplady. Alt.*



"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

CHAPTER IX

ROCK OF AGES

One day in the year 1756, an evangelistic meeting was held in a barn at the little village of Codymain, Ireland. The sermon was preached by an illiterate man who could scarcely read or write. The only tangible result of that meeting was the conversion of a boy sixteen years of age. I presume some who were present remarked, "This service has been a failure; only a single, unpromising boy converted." But that awkward boy was Augustus Montague Toplady, who became the author of "Rock of Ages."

He was born at Farnham, England, November 4, 1740. At the age of twenty-two he received orders in the Church of England. He was a voluminous writer, the author of many hymns, and a strenuous defender of Calvinistic theology, but he is now hardly known except as the author of this famous hymn. He died in London, August 11, 1778, at the age of thirty-eight.

It is an interesting coincidence that this hymn was written the same year in which American independence was declared, 1776. There is no question but that this hymn is one of the noblest expressions of evangelical faith and worship to be found in all hymnology. The editors of The Sunday at Home, an English publication, invited their readers to send lists of the hundred English hymns which stood highest in their esteem. Three thousand five hundred persons responded to the invitation. "Rock of Ages" was named first by three thousand two hundred and fifteen people, thus showing that it was regarded as the most popular hymn in Great Britain.

This hymn was a favorite of Mr. Gladstone and was translated by him into the Italian. The translation fell into the hands of that gifted Italian Signor Bonghi, and inspired him to write the life of Christ. Many thousands of this book have been sold to Italians who, for the first time, have read the gospel story. Several tunes have been written for this hymn, but the most popular one was written by Thomas Hastings. The hymn has been more or less altered and rearranged but the sentiment remains the same.

My task is to bring before you the funda-

mental lessons of this hymn, which one declares to be "the best known, best loved, and most widely useful hymn in the English language."

First of all, Toplady's hymn suggests the most fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, the atonement. We see this very clearly in the following lines:

> Let the water and the blood,
> From thy wounded side which flowed,
> Be of sin the double cure,
> Save from wrath and make me pure.
>
> Could my tears forever flow,
> Could my zeal no languor know,
> These for sin could not atone;
> Thou must save, and thou alone.

In the hymn as first written occur the following lines:

> Foul I to the fountain fly:
> Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

Thus we see the doctrine of the atonement clearly set forth. This doctrine has been the storm center in many a theological controversy; it has been the theme of many philosophical disquisitions; it has been the prolific source of many books, essays, and tracts. It is not my present purpose to discuss the atonement from a theological or philosophical but

from a practical point of view. What does this precious doctrine mean to a sinning world? What is its significance to the man who is entrapped in the terrible meshes of appetite, lust, greed, or other sin?

In this hymn Toplady views the atonement from this outlook. He himself called the hymn "A living and dying prayer." Recognizing the sufferings and death of Christ as the only foundation for his salvation, he prays that the blood of Christ may make him pure, that his every sin may be washed away in Calvary's fountain. Spurgeon expresses Toplady's conception in a vivid manner as follows: "A glimpse at the thorn-crowned head and pierced hands and feet is a sure cure for modern doubt, and all its vagaries. Get into the 'Rock of Ages, cleft for' you, and you will abhor the quicksand."

The relation of the atonement to human sin has been clearly set forth in the following succinct statement: "It is perfectly clear to me that God has made happiness a normal result, sooner or later, of holiness, and misery a normal result, sooner or later, of sin. Moreover, righteousness is more precious in His sight than happiness, and sin a worse evil than suffering. If, then his Son, in order to pro-

vide for all men a way of escape from sin and death, and to effect the restoration of vast multitudes to righteousness and life, suffered without sin the penalty of their sins, the increase of holiness and happiness must be immeasurably great, and the revelation of God's wisdom and love exceedingly clear." Thus the practical result of the atonement when operative in the human heart is to produce a state of holiness and happiness.

A young wife was lying low in a hospital in New York. The anxious husband turned to the attending physician and said, "Doctor, what can be done?"

He answered, "If we could only put blood into her veins we could save her."

Instantly the husband replied, "Could you take my blood? She can have it all."

Then he put forth his left arm, the main artery was opened, and as the blood flowed from the one to the other he grew weaker while she grew stronger; he gave a part of his life to renew her life. This is the powerful effect of human love. Does Christ love us less? Did he sacrifice for us less sparingly? Does not his atonement mean, life, forgiveness, and spiritual health to the true penitent? Yea, verily! "He hath poured out his soul unto

death." "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Was it for crimes that I have done,
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

The all-sufficiency of the atonement to meet every human need has been emphasized by the apostles, the apologists, the church fathers, the martyrs, the reformers, the evangelists, the missionaries, the preachers, and the teachers of the Christian Church. Yea, this has been the chief message of Christianity to the sons and daughters of men in every age. The atonement encompasses every human need; the blood of Christ can make the foulest clean; the sacrifice on Calvary was entirely sufficient for man's redemption; he is able to save "unto the uttermost" all who come to him. Hear this, ye who are tossed on the wild sea of doubt, who are held captive by sin, who are defeated by spiritual enemies, and who succumb to an adverse environment. The atonement is just as efficacious in this progressive twentieth century as it was when Christ languished on the cross, and cried out, "It is finished."

In a pastorate in a New England city I was requested to call upon a young man twenty-seven years of age who was ill with consumption. He had just been brought home from a distant city, where he had squandered his money, his health, and his character in riotous living. He had an intense prejudice against ministers and churches. Before entering his sick room, his mother took me into the parlor and, with a breaking heart, told me the sad story of her boy's degeneracy. With a firm resolution to help the young man if possible, and with a prayer for divine aid, I entered the sick chamber. He was spared for about three months and I called on him many times. After I had become acquainted with him and had overcome some of his prejudices, I urged him one day to surrender unreservedly to Christ. He looked at me and said: "You would not ask me to do that if you knew how very wicked I have been. God would never forgive me; I have been too great a sinner." I tried to tell him how very merciful God is, and that he certainly would forgive all his sins. But for a time I failed to lead him to grasp the great personal import of the atonement. Finally I said to him: "John, I have a special message for you from God himself. Listen

while I give it to you. It is this: 'God so loved you, John M——, that he gave his only begotten Son, that if you, John M——, believe in him, you shall not perish, John M——, but you, John M——, shall have everlasting life.'" All was quiet for a moment and then, looking steadfastly at me, he said, "Do you mean to tell me that is what that passage means?" I told him that it was precisely what it means and pressed him to lay hold of this great promise with tight grip. As he lay there in bed he seemed suddenly to see the Saviour languishing on the cross for his sins. Tears sprang to his eyes; faith and hope filled his heart; an earnest prayer rose from his lips to the great white throne, and John M—— then and there became a new creature in Christ Jesus. It was my privilege to be with John in the dying hour. Stooping over his bed, I asked him concerning his faith and hope. A smile o'erspread his countenance as he whispered distinctly in my ear: "It is all right. It is all right. I shall soon be with my Saviour." And John was not, for God took him. Praise God for the old gospel—the gospel of the atonement, able to save unto the uttermost, able to reach man in his lowest earthly estate, able to lift him "out of the miry

clay," to "set his feet upon a rock," to "establish his goings," to put a "new song in his mouth," to inspire a new hope in his heart, to give him a new vision of the possibilities of life, and to sanctify and glorify his manhood.

The people in Iceland relate a legend concerning Jesus as a boy. While playing with his comrades one day he made birds out of clay. When he had completed a number of these clay birds, an old Sadducee came along, and, disgusted at the sport, dashed the birds to pieces. The legend then says that Jesus waved his hand over the broken birds, and they took wings and soared skyward. It is only a fable of the Icelanders, but it is suggestive of the most precious truth ever known to sinning humanity. Jesus still touches marred, broken, sinful man with his pierced hand, and man rises above all that is sordid, selfish, and sinful and holds sweet fellowship with all that is pure, noble, and divine. "Warm, sweet, tender, even yet a present help is he"; we still "touch him in life's throng and press, and we are whole again." Thus does Whittier express the glorious effect of the atonement as applied to man. Cowper, in one of his famous hymns, touches the same note as Toplady, and sings:

Thou dying Lamb! Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Are saved, to sin no more.

As we continue to study this great hymn we see Toplady referring to Christ under the highly suggestive and beautiful figure of a rock.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

These are not only the opening but the closing lines of the hymn. As we study the Bible carefully we find that the word "rock" is used frequently in a figurative manner. Thus in the Old Testament we discover that God is called a "rock" twenty-six times. Moses declares, "He is the Rock, his work is perfect." The psalmist writes: "The Lord is my rock and fortress; the God of my rock; in him will I trust." "Blessed be my rock!" "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I!" "He only is my rock and salvation." Rocks are spoken of as places of refuge no less than twenty times in the Old Testament. Christ employs this figure in the climax of his sermon on the mount: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a

wise man, which built his house upon a rock." When Christ founds the Christian Church upon the confession of Peter, he employs the same figure: "Upon this rock I will build my church." Paul uses the same figure in I Cor. 10. 4: "They drank of that spiritual Rock . . . and that Rock was Christ."

So when Toplady sings, "Rock of ages, cleft for me," he employs a familiar scriptural figure as well as a highly suggestive one. Herein is one reason why this hymn is such a universal favorite. Toplady was one day overtaken by a terrific thunderstorm, from which he sought refuge in a cleft, between two massive piers of limestone rock. While the storm raged it inspired in his soul the idea of this hymn. We thus clearly see the picture the author had in mind when he penned these words. It is a picture of a human soul, seeking refuge amid the storms of life in the great heart of Christ.

There is a beautiful incident which clearly illustrates this great conception of Toplady's. A prosperous New York business man, meeting with reverses, plunged into the sea of sin, became utterly discouraged, and finally determined to end his wretched life. Passing down the Bowery, he entered the narrow thorough-

fare formerly known as Shinbone Alley, now Doyers Street. As he passed a mission hall he was arrested by the old song—

> Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in thee.

Listening intently, he asked himself: "Can this be for me? It is the hymn my father and mother sang years ago away off in my country home. Here I am, a drunkard, lost, lost!" Again the sweet old words came to his ears, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." Looking up into the starlit sky, he exclaimed, "Can I hide myself in thee?" A battle raged in his bosom as the tempter whispered, "Hide thyself under the waves of the sea," but after a few moments of hesitation he said, "I will go in." Once in the mission hall he sat and listened to the testimonies of those who had been drunkards, thieves, harlots, and sinners of every sort. They all told how they had found a safe refuge in the "Rock of Ages." When penitents were invited to come forward for prayer this wretched, sinful man entered into the cleft in the broken heart of Christ and found forgiveness and peace. Methinks that in that great day when Christ gathers all his jewels before the white throne, there will be many among

them who were led into the eternal city through the instrumentality of Toplady's hymn.

The conception of Christ as the "Rock of Ages" is not only a great conception for the penitent but it is also a great conception for the Christian. In the midst of temptations, trials, burden-bearing, adversities, and sorrows he has a never-failing refuge in the "Rock of Ages." It is a beautiful and comforting thought that we can take all the troubles and entanglements of life to Jesus. When John the Baptist was beheaded, the heartbroken disciples "went and told Jesus." Yes, when trials beset you, tell Jesus; when adversity overtakes you, tell Jesus; when the burdens are heavy, tell Jesus; when sorrows crush you, tell Jesus. To the really consecrated life there is something intensely real about telling Jesus all the joys and sorrows, all the hopes and disappointments of life.

It was this thought which prompted Bishop McDowell to say: "Jesus is not merely a fine example. He is a personal power. . . . He is ever sharing our activities. From his perpetual presence with us we evermore receive our life." Dr. Talmage puts this thought clearly as follows: "We are slaves; Christ gives deliverance to the captive. We are thirsty;

Christ is the river of salvation to slake our thirst. We are hungry; Jesus is the 'bread of life.' We are condemned to die; Christ says, 'I am the ransom.' We are tossed on a sea of troubles; Jesus comes over it, saying, 'It is I; be not afraid.' We are in darkness; Jesus says, 'I am the bright and morning star.' We are sick; Jesus is the balm of Gilead. We are dead; hear the shrouds rend and the grave hillocks heave as he cries, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' " Well hath it been said, "Christ is no empty abstraction, no bloodless theory, but bone of our bone, brother of our own body and breath, yet marred by no weakness, scarred by no sin, tossing back temptations as some Gibraltar tosses back the sea's billows and the bits of driftwood."

Christ—our Rock! What a glorious conception this is! A rock suggests strength, solidity, power, majesty, and permanency. Surely, Christ suggests all this. He is the strong Rock upon which we may build our spiritual house; he is the solid Rock on which we may ever stand while all about us are the sinking sands; he is the all-powerful Rock in whose cleft we may ever find sweet refuge;

he is the majestic Rock, for "no mortal can with him compare"; he is the permanent Rock, for he "shall reign till moons shall wax and wane no more."

When the ill-fated steamer Seawanhaka sank, many of the passengers were clinging to life preservers and portions of the wreck. Presently a young wife said to her husband, "I can hold on no longer."

"Try a little longer," urged her husband, "and let us sing 'Rock of Ages.'"

As they sang, others joined, and from amid the perilous waters rose this sweet, pleading prayer:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

The song inspired the exhausted bodies with new strength and they held on till they were rescued by a lifeboat. The man who started the song that night said he believed Toplady's sweet "Rock of Ages" saved many another besides himself and wife.

O thou blessed "Rock of Ages"! Man, tossed on the troubled sea of sin, may come and hear thee say, "Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee." Man, tossed on the sea of darkness, may come and hear thee say, "I

am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Man, tossed on the sea of doubt, may come and hear thee say, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Man, tossed on the sea of trial, may come and hear thee say, "It is I; be not afraid. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." O Rock of salvation! Rock of Light! Rock of Truth! Rock of Refuge! Let me ever "hide myself in thee"!

Once more this great hymn points unerringly to Christ as our complete Deliverer in the hour of death. In the last verse Toplady triumphantly sings:

> While I draw this fleeting breath,
> When my eyes shall close in death,
> When I rise to worlds unknown,
> And behold thee on thy throne,
> Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in thee.

Toplady was never a rugged man, and passed to his reward at the age of thirty-eight. Not long before his departure his physician spoke encouragingly to him of his prospects. But the patient answered: "No, no; I shall die, for no mortal could endure such manifestations of God's glory as I have, and live." When

within a few hours of the end he exclaimed: "My heart beats every day stronger and stronger for glory. Sickness is no affliction, pain no curse, death itself no dissolution." He died while singing one of his own hymns.

Many have risen to the heavenly life on the wings of this grand hymn. Prince Albert, of England, repeated this hymn constantly upon his dying bed. "For if in this hour," said he, "I had only my worldly honors and dignities to depend upon, I should be indeed poor." Years ago a body of Armenians were butchered near Constantinople, and even as the sword fell they sang in their native tongue, "Rock of Ages." It is said that General Stuart, the brilliant cavalry leader of the Confederacy, sang this hymn as his life ebbed slowly away through the wounds he had received in the battles before Richmond. When the London sank in the Bay of Biscay in 1866, the last man who left the ship heard the voices of passengers singing, "Rock of Ages." This was a favorite hymn with dying soldiers during the Civil War. A Christian Commission worker describes the death of a soldier whom he heard singing the last verse of this hymn and adds, "I knew that the life that had gone was hid with Christ in God." Such is the comfort

and such the hope which Toplady's hymn have inspired in multitudes of God's children as they have faced the life beyond.

Death, to the sordid, selfish, and sinful soul, is the direst of all calamities. It is the blighting of all hopes, the end of all pleasures, the interruption of unfulfilled plans, the darkest night without a star, the dispelling of the fondest dreams, the judgment bar of God without the only Mediator, Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, death to the consecrated Christian soul is the most glorious triumph. It is but the beginning of real life, the beautiful gate at the entrance to paradise, the haven of rest, the jewel of rarest promise, the fulfilling of greatest hopes, the happy realization of fondest dreams, the fellowship of the angels and the redeemed of the ages, the development of all the higher powers of the soul, the crown of life eternal, and all the promised rewards of the overcomer. Well has it been said: "Good men but see death; the wicked taste it."

Maltbie D. Babcock once wrote: "Death can never interrupt a faithful Christian life. When we feel the touch upon our shoulder and hear the word whispered in our ear, we may be at our work or on a journey, walking the street

or asleep in our beds, praying at church or fishing in the country. What difference does it make? We are trying to please our God in what is our business just then. Sacred places and times have no superior advantage for the dying. Sacredness is in the motive of the heart that would do everything as unto the Lord, dying along with the rest. As heaven is still the glad doing of God's will, where is there any interruption?" What an uplifting conception of the Christian's death Babcock thus gives us! Death, to the Christian, is not the crushing of hopes, not the overthrow of plans, nor the interruption of life. It but marks the beginning of a far better life, a more rapid and satisfactory development, and a richer and more delightful fellowship with God.

A noble Christian woman lay upon her deathbed in a Boston hospital. The night she died she said to an attendant: "Will you please raise the curtain?" There, on a large church opposite the hospital, flooded by moonlight, stood Thorwaldsen's statue of the Christ. In silence she gazed upon it for a time until the nurse started to lower the curtain. "Don't drop the curtain," pleaded the dying saint, "I want to look at Christ."

O friends, get a clear view of the Christ. Look at him as he stands the faultless model among men! Look at him as he agonizes yonder in Gethsemane! Look at him as he languishes on yonder cross for your redemption! Look at him as he breaks the bars of the tomb and comes forth a victor! Look at him as he ascends in triumph! Look at him as he sits on the throne of the universe crowned "King of kings and Lord of lords"! Look at him as he stands at the right hand of God interceding on your behalf! Look at him in simple faith and your sins will be forgiven! Look at him amid all troubles and you shall find a sweet refuge! Look at him when earthly scenes grow dim and cold shadows fall, and he will open the pearly gates of the Holy City and you shall pass to your coronation!

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark;
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.

CHAPTER X

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years!

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

—*John H. Newman.*

"Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!"

CHAPTER X

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

When the Parliament of Religions convened at Chicago, the representatives of all creeds from every part of the world found two things on which they were agreed. They could all unite in the recital of the Lord's Prayer and in singing "Lead, Kindly Light."

The author of this well-known and greatly loved hymn, John Henry Newman, was born in London, England, February 21, 1801. He was named after his father, who was a prosperous banker and a deeply religious man. When Newman was nineteen years of age he was graduated from Trinity College, Oxford, and afterward he pursued postgraduate studies in Oriel College. After teaching for several years he became rector of Saint Mary's, Oxford, in 1828.

It is not necessary in a study of this character to trace the gradual drift of Newman toward the Roman Church. It is enough to say that he left the Anglican Church in

October, 1845, and entered the Roman Catholic communion. In this church he was soon recognized and honored. He held several important positions and finally, in 1879, he was made a cardinal. He was a prolific writer, a keen theologian, and an attractive speaker. "As a gracious and winning personality his place is of the highest, as is his power of expression." He died at Birmingham, England, August 11, 1890.

It was on June 16, 1833, more than twelve years before he became a Romanist, that Newman wrote this immortal hymn. We will let him tell how he came to write it. He says: "I was aching to get home; yet for want of a vessel was kept at Palermo for three weeks. At last I got an orange-boat bound for Marseilles. We were becalmed a whole week on the Mediterranean Sea. Then it was that I wrote the lines: 'Lead, Kindly Light.'"

This hymn has proved a great blessing and a holy inspiration to many. A person who was involved in the meshes of secularism and agnosticism gives this testimony: "I was in the slough of despond, at the center of indifference, with the everlasting 'no' on my lips, when 'Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom' came to my troubled soul like the voice

of angels. Wandering in the wilderness, 'o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent,' Newman's hymn was to me a green oasis, a healing spring, the shadow of a great rock." Thousands could give similar testimony concerning the helpfulness of this hymn. It is preeminently a hymn of guidance. A hymnologist declares, "Of all the modern hymns praying for guidance, Newman's famous three stanzas seem to be most popular."

Newman's hymn suggests that in this world of changes and mysteries, erring man needs a guide. He indicates this in the following lines:

> The night is dark, and I am far from home.
> O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
> The night is gone.

Because there are dark nights of mystery in life, because we are wanderers "far from home," because the moors, fens, crags, and torrents of this earthly life are many—we all need a guide. The noted Egyptian Labyrinth was one of the wonders of the world. Herodotus says that it contained three thousand chambers, and when a stranger entered it he could not go out without a guide. That old labyrinth is suggestive of these earthly

lives of ours. It is an unknown, mysterious, and difficult path we are traveling, and we surely need a guide.

It was my unusual privilege to explore the vast extinct crater of Haleakala on the island of Maui. It is twenty miles in circumference, two thousand feet deep, and is said to be the largest extinct crater in the world. It is dangerous to explore this crater without a competent guide. The clouds often lower very quickly and fill the crater; the winds blow the sand and utterly obliterate the footprints of those who passed but a few days before; water is not to be found; and there are bleaching bones of unfortunate cattle that wandered in and could not find the way out. An incompetent guide led a distinguished American lecturer and a friend into this crater a few years ago and, losing the way, they wandered helplessly for a long time over the rough lava formations. Foolish is the man who ventures into such a place without a good guide. But let me tell you of a man who is even more foolish. I mean that man who attempts to pass safely through the dangerous and mysterious labyrinth of life without a guide. He will surely lose his way, and will sooner or later be overtaken by moral and spiritual dis-

aster. He is like an engineer who foolishly disregards the red lights of danger and rushes on into the darkness; he is like the mariner who does not heed the chart, the compass, and the pilot.

How very pathetic the position of the agnostic who feels his need of a guide and yet stumbles on in doubt and darkness! It was such a one who wrote the following:

The way is dark: I cry amid the gloom,
For guiding light;
A wanderer, none knows whence or what his doom,
I brave the night.
Fair scenes afar, as in a dream, I see,
Then seem to wake, and faith deserteth me.

In sharp contrast with this bitter wail are the prayers of God's children seeking guidance. Note the prayer of Moses, and its answer: "I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight. . . . And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." The psalmist prays: "Lead me in thy truth and teach me." "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." William Williams prays:

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land:
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand."

Yes, amid changes, mysteries, doubts, perplexities, and labyrinths man needs a guide more than all else besides. He needs a guide who will lead him safely and unerringly through all the vicissitudes of this present life and up yon shining road which leadeth to the pearly gates of the "city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Newman realized very keenly his need of a guide. Only a short time before writing this hymn he was very ill with malarial fever. During the progress of his illness he became very much depressed and sobbed bitterly. His servant thought he was dying. He seemed dazed and "amid the encircling gloom." So, as he emerged from this illness he breathed the prayer for guidance found in this hymn. Man in every age has felt the same necessity for a guide that Newman felt. We are all very human. "All we like sheep have gone astray." We are prone to wander, to stumble, and to fall. Our very humanity makes a guide necessary for present and eternal safety.

Newman's hymn suggests that many are

making the great mistake of allowing their own pride and desires to guide them. The second stanza pictures the author's condition before he sought the guidance of the Christ:

> I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
> Shouldst lead me on;
> I loved to choose and see my path; but now
> Lead thou me on!
> I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
> Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years!

Thus does Newman recall very vividly those days when he refused to permit Christ to guide, and was led by his own false pride and selfish desires.

The majority of those who lose their lives in mountain-climbing are those who neglect or refuse to secure a competent guide. They do not realize the difficulties and dangers of mountain-scaling and think they do not need a guide. A number of years ago a party ascended Mount Washington without one. The hotel proprietor urged them to take one, but they refused. Finally, realizing their danger, he told them he would let them have a good guide for nothing rather than to have them take the risk alone. But they laughingly refused and said they much preferred to make

the ascent alone. All went well until they neared the top, when a heavy snowstorm enveloped them and soon they were helplessly bewildered. Darkness came and they repented of their folly and wished they had a guide, but it was too late. In the morning the storm had cleared and the keepers of the Tip-top House discovered the party not far from the house. But one of the party, a beautiful young lady, had been frozen to death during that awful night. A pile of stones now marks the spot where this young lady perished. This tragedy occurred because the party refused to be led, and declared, "We do not need the services of a guide."

But I can tell you of ten thousand times ten thousand tragedies which are infinitely sadder than this. If myriads of tombstones truthfully were inscribed, they would read somewhat as follows: "Here lies a man who was slain by appetite." "Here lies a man who brought on self-destruction through lust." "Here lies a man who was ruined by false pride." "Here lies a man who fell a victim of greed." Such are the real tragedies of life, for the tragedy of the soul is far more terrible to contemplate than the tragic death of a body. The Master of men placed a man's soul in

one scale of a balance and the whole material world in the other scale and declared that the single soul outweighed the world. O the tragedy of the soul's overthrow! It cannot be described in words too graphic. And perhaps the saddest thing of all is found in the fact that it could easily have been prevented. Such tragedies are the direct result of neglectfulness or refusal to accept divine guidance. Such neglect or refusal is the most colossal blunder mortal man ever makes. We must pass into eternity. We must meet God face to face. We must meet our earthly record in the great Day of Judgment. In view of these solemn facts, how utterly foolish for puny man to refuse divine guidance. Theodore Monod expresses this thought tersely as follows:

> O the bitter shame and sorrow,
> That a time could ever be
> When I let the Saviour's pity
> Plead in vain, and proudly answered,
> "All of self, and none of thee."

Newman's hymn suggests that man secures an ideal guide in Jesus Christ. This is indicated clearly in the expressions, "Lead, kindly Light," and "Lead thou me on." Here Newman refers to Christ under the figure of

"Light." He borrowed this beautiful figure from the words of Christ himself. Christ uses the word "light" seven times in referring to himself. How beautiful is the passage and how suggestive of Newman's hymn, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"! John, in the opening chapter of his Gospel, declares, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . That was the true Light."

Astronomers inform us that the real difference between a star and a planet is that the planet shines only by reflected light, but the star is in reality a sun, and shines of itself. Other great teachers and religious leaders have lived, but the light they gave was merely reflected and only reached a few. Christ is the great central sun of the spiritual universe and shines of his own light. All others are reflectors; he is "the true Light." All others are satellites; he is the "bright and morning star." Viewing Christ as the one great light of this dark world, how suggestive and how beautiful is the prayer:

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!"

Edward Hopper, in his comforting hymn, gives us the same conception:

Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass came from thee;
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

How inspiring, how soothing, and how helpful is the consciousness of the divine leadership! God does not abandon man and leave him to pilot his own frail craft over the treacherous sea of life. God does not leave man helplessly stranded amid the dark mazes of life without a light. God does not compel man to undertake a mysterious journey without a competent guide. Man may have a skillful pilot, a glorious light, a faithful guide if he so desires. God's message to erring man is as follows: "The Lord shall guide thee continually." "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." These are only a few jewels taken from God's exhaustless storehouse. The Bible teaches the blessed reality of divine leadership by many promises and illustrations. We cannot think of Noah,

Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, and many other worthies without thinking of God's leadership. God promises to lead man in times of prosperity and of adversity, in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, in life and in death. He promises to guide him through all the vicissitudes of life, to lead him safely across the river of death and into the midst of the paradise of God.

The city of Ulm, garrisoned by forty thousand troops, surrendered to Napoleon. On the same day that Napoleon compelled Ulm to capitulate, his navy was destroyed by Nelson at Trafalgar. Hearing of this great disaster, Napoleon sadly exclaimed, "I cannot be present everywhere at once." It is even so with all earthly leaders. They are subjected to many limitations. But our leader and guide, Jesus Christ, has no limitations. He is the ever-living Christ. He is the unchanging Christ. He is the all-powerful Christ. He is the all-wise Christ. He is the ever-present Christ. "Lo, I am with you alway." Blessed assurance! It matters not where I may be in this workaday world or what my lot may be. Under all circumstances I may sing in triumph:

He leadeth me! O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Robert Louis Stevenson speaks of the divine leadership in his life as follows: "Of that great change of campaign, which decided all this part of my life, and turned me from one whose business it was to shirk into one whose business it was to strive and persevere, it seems to me as though all had been done by someone else. . . . I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that Unknown Steersman whom we call God." Amiel, conscious of the divine leadership, wrote in his journal, "Strong as the universe or feeble as the worm, according as we represent God or only ourselves: as we lean upon the Infinite Being or stand alone." That truly great man Phillips Brooks, speaking of the reality of Christ's presence and guidance, said: "He is here. He knows me and I know him. It is no figure of speech. It is the realest thing in the world." Such is the leadership of Christ. Such is its reality. Such is its blessedness. Such is its sufficiency.

This divine guidance is for all conditions and classes of people. The poet and the peasant,

the philosopher and the ignorant toiler, the scientist and the artisan, the statesman and the humble plowman, the historian and the fisherman—yea, every repentant soul may become conscious of the fact that Christ is piloting him "over life's tempestuous sea." The sainted A. J. Gordon once wrote: "Every regenerated soul sets out on its voyage with an invisible Captain on board, who knows the nature of our sealed orders from the outset, and who will shape our entire voyage accordingly if we will only let him." Wise and blessed is that man who lets Christ shape the entire voyage of his life. As the years, one by one, roll into eternity he will have an increasing realization of the beautiful experience of the blind Fanny Crosby when she wrote:

All the way my Saviour leads me:
  What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt his tender mercy,
  Who thro' life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
  Here by faith in him to dwell!
For I know whate'er befall me,
  Jesus doeth all things well.

Newman's hymn suggests that if we are to be guided safely, we must put implicit trust in our Guide. Listen to him as he prays:

"Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

Here Newman places absolute trust in his Guide. He resigns himself completely to divine leadership. He does not pray for a single future scene to be unveiled. He does not ask for guidance in the dim future. He prays simply that his feet may be guided step by step in the way of righteousness. His prayer recalls a stanza which I learned when a small boy and which has comforted me during the passing years:

So I go on not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I would rather walk with God in the dark
Than to go alone in the light.

It is necessary for us to trust our guide implicitly because we cannot tell how or where he will lead us. I was in the engine room of the battleship Oregon one day, located down in the very heart of the great vessel. Standing there, I thought how the engineer, with his hand on the lever, awaits his orders from the captain. He cannot see the vessel move. He knows not where she is going. He trusts the captain implicitly. He starts the engine, quickens or slows its motion, according to command. He has absolutely nothing to do

with the course of the vessel. Like the engineer hidden in the heart of the vessel, we cannot see the way before us. We know not where he will lead. Neither is it necessary for us to know. It is not our part to guide our frail bark over our uncertain sea. It is simply our duty to trust the great Pilot at the helm. He knows the future, and because he does, let us exclaim with Newman, "One step enough for me."

George Matheson expresses this thought in a beautiful manner as follows: "When the distant scene is denied me, when the gloom encircles me, when the things of to-morrow are veiled from me, help me to say, 'One step enough for me!' When the voice of Moses is heard no more on the hill, when the song of Miriam has been drowned by the roaring wind, when the fire of the bush has been hid by intervening trees, help me to say, 'One step enough for me.' Let the one step be the ordered step. . . . When I view not thy glory, let me have thy guidance. When there is no dove from heaven, let there be a duty of the hour. When I have lost sight of thy coming, let me strain the ear for thy command. I shall not weep the want of the wing if only I can say, 'One step enough for me.'"

A tourist, climbing an Alpine mountain with the assistance of an experienced guide, hesitated to place his foot in the guide's hand in order to step around a projecting rock, when the guide exclaimed, "This hand never lost a man." Then the traveler trusted him and passed around the rock safely. Our Divine Guide has never lost a single follower who has trusted him. He holds his own securely in the hollow of his pierced hand. In the dangerous and mysterious ascents of life we may trust him with a sense of absolute security. We may trust implicitly because "underneath are the everlasting arms." We are the sheep of his pasture and he leadeth us "beside the still waters, and into the green pastures."

Beneath his watchful eye
His saints securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard his children well.

One rare July day I crossed that beautiful sheet of water Yellowstone Lake. I became interested in a small boy who was at the helm. At first I thought it strange that the steamer and the lives of the passengers should be intrusted to a mere boy. But ere long I heard a voice say, "Starboard," and the boy obeyed

instantly. Then, looking back of the boy, I discovered the old captain standing in the shadow. He was watching the course of the vessel and the boy was merely a passive instrument in the hands of the captain. This is the way we should rest in the hands of the Captain of our salvation. If we listen to his voice, obey unquestioningly his commands, and follow his leadership, he will pilot us safely through the calms and storms of life and into the heavenly port. As the old captain watched the boy, so God is standing in the shadow, "keeping watch above his own." Maltbie D. Babcock writes of the trust that should characterize each of our lives as follows:

He holds the key to all unknown,
And I am glad;
If other hands should hold the key,
Or if he trusted it to me,
I might be sad.

. . . . . .

I cannot read his future plans,
But this I know,
I have the smiling of his face
And all the refuge of his grace
While here below.

Newman's hymn also suggests that death to the man led by Christ will not be good night

but good morning. How trustful, how sweet, how triumphant is that last stanza:

> So long thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
> Will lead me on
> O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
> The night is gone,
> And with the morn those angel faces smile,
> Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

Death to the man without the Christ as guide is sunset without a dawn, darkness without a sunbeam, good night without a good morning. With Christ as guide, death is sunrise, a glorious dawn, a bright good morning, and a blessed awakening. The late Arthur T. Pierson wrote: "Sunrise follows the setting of the sun, and the sunset of life is the sunrise of immortality." Victor Hugo penned: "When I go down to the grave I can say, like so many others, 'I have finished my day's work,' but I cannot say, 'I have finished my life.' My work will begin again next morning." Among Moody's last words were: "This is my coronation day, and I have been looking forward to it for years. Earth is receding; heaven is opening; God is calling." I kindly urged a dying saint not to use her remaining strength by talking. Calling me by name, she said, "Can I not use what strength I have left in

praising Jesus?" Then she talked to me like one who was already within the beautiful gates and spoke with rapture about the eternal day-break. H. F. Lyte was dying of consumption. Knowing that there was no hope of recovery, he went into his study, looked death in the very face, and then wrote the heroic words:

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

These and countless thousands more have had the same conception of death as Newman had when he wrote about the passing of the night, the breaking of the morn, and the smile of "those angel faces."

There is a lighthouse at Gibraltar whose rays of light may be seen a long distance away, showing vessels the general direction of approach. In the very center of the red rays of the light is a pure white ray. It is only when this ray rests upon the prow of a ship that it can make a safe entrance. It is only when the rays of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon the soul in the darkness of death that it can steer straight into harbor and not make shipwreck. The soul thus illumined goes

directly into the arms of the great pilot, Jesus Christ.

When President Garfield was nearing the end, he was alone in the sick room with Dr. Bliss. Presently a voice was heard singing. Garfield recognized the voice as that of his wife and requested Dr. Bliss to open the door. "Listen," said the President, as she continued:

"When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Bear me through the swelling current
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises
I will ever give to thee."

As she finished, Garfield exclaimed: "Glorious, isn't it, Bliss?" O yes, glorious indeed is the thought that the presence of our Divine Guide may turn the darkness of death into the sunrise of heaven, may change the good night of life into the good morning of eternity, may supplant the farewells of earth by the rapturous greetings of paradise, may bear us safely "through the swelling current," and land us "on Canaan's side."

Life, we've been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather,
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear—
Perhaps 'twill cause a sigh, a tear;

Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not good night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me good morning.

CHAPTER XI

ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS!

ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS!

Onward, Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.
Christ, the royal Master,
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
See, his banners go!

REFRAIN

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.

At the sign of triumph
Satan's host doth flee;
On, then, Christian soldiers,
On to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver
At the shout of praise;
Brothers, lift your voices,
Loud your anthems raise.

Like a mighty army
Moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod;
We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity.

Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus
Constant will remain;
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst that church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail.

Onward, then, ye people!
Join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices
In the triumph-song;
Glory, laud, and honor
Unto Christ the King,
This through countless ages
Men and angels sing.

—*Sabine Baring-Gould.*

CHAPTER XI

ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS!

THIS is the best-known and most popular marching hymn of the Christian Church. The author of this stirring song is the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould. He was born at Exeter, England, January 28, 1834, and is the eldest son of Edward Baring-Gould, of Lew-Trenchard, Devon, which has been the family seat for over three hundred years. He was graduated from Clare College, Oxford, in 1856, and entered the ministry of the Established Church. Since 1881 he has been rector of Lew-Trenchard, in Devon. He is a versatile writer, for among his books we find biography, history, legend, fiction, and religion.

He is the author of a number of excellent hymns, but "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" is his only successful hymn, and the only one usually found in modern collections. His sweetest hymn is an evening hymn, the first two stanzas of which are as follows:

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With thy tend'rest blessing,
May our eyelids close.

"Onward, Christian Soldiers!" was written for a special occasion in 1865. On Whit Monday of that year the Sunday school children in the village where the author resided were to march to an adjoining village. The author wanted the children to sing when marching, but could not find anything suitable. So he sat up at night and while others slept he composed this hymn. Thirty years after writing it he said, "It was written in great haste, and I am afraid some of the rhymes are faulty. Certainly, nothing has surprised me more than its popularity." Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan was the composer of many tunes, but the majestic, conquering tune which he has given this hymn will do more than all else besides to immortalize his name.

In studying this hymn it seems to me that the author, first of all, conceives of the Christian as a soldier and the church as an army.

These two thoughts are clearly set forth in the following lines:

Onward, Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war.

Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God.

This conception of the Christian and of the church is in perfect accord with Scripture. Paul thought of the Christian as a soldier standing heroically on the battlefield of life clothed with all the panoply of God. His direct message to the Christian soldier is, "War a good warfare." "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "Put on the whole armor of God." "Having done all, stand." It was this conception of the mission of his disciples which led Christ to declare, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." Viewing his little band as the nucleus of a coming conquering army, he gave the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

There are many in these enlightened days

who have a mistaken conception of the church and her mission in the world. The church is not primarily a hospital where sickly saints are tenderly nursed; not a fort where Christian soldiers are protected from harm; not an ark where we may find a sweet refuge amid raging storms; not a retreat where we may safely sing and pray; not an agency to instruct and entertain us. There are multitudes who never go beyond such conceptions of the Church of Christ.

Every worthy member of the church is a soldier. Such members constitute an army. This army is marshaled upon the battlefield of earth for the express purpose of making people like Christ, earth like heaven, in fine, the kingdoms of this world the kingdom of our Lord. Dr. George Lorimer well has said, "There is nothing more pitiable than a soulless, sapless, shriveled church, seeking to thrive in a worldly atmosphere, rooted in barren professions, bearing no fruit and maintaining only the semblance of existence." It is indeed pitiable to see the sickly, sentimental, and puerile conceptions which many people have of the church. Let us acquire the clear conception of the Christian Church which the author of this hymn had when he wrote:

Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God.

This conception of the church led Washington Gladden to write: "Religion is not an ultimate fact. When men are religious just for the sake of being religious, their religion is good for nothing. Religion is for character. Its end is gained when it has made us good men and women. Religion is for service. It finds its justification in the work that it can do in making a better world of this—"To save the world." That was the errand of the Christ; that is the business of his church."

The Christian a soldier! The church an army! What glorious conceptions! The church should indeed be "like a mighty army," and should move with a solid front against greed, against civic corruption, against the legalized saloon, against Sabbath desecration; yea, against every form of evil. The task of the church will not be completed until every spiritual enemy is overthrown and every nation and tribe acknowledge Christ as Saviour and King.

Go forward, Christian soldier,
Nor dream of peaceful rest,
Till Satan's host is vanquished,
And heaven is all possessed.

Till Christ himself shall call thee
To lay thine armor by,
And wear, in endless glory,
The crown of victory.

Again, this marching hymn of the Christian Church suggests that the ideal church is a united church.

We are not divided,
All one body we;
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity.

This is a vision of the ideal, a beautiful picture of united Christianity. Baring-Gould may have been thinking of his own local church when he wrote those lines, or he may have been thinking of a golden future when the Church of Christ on earth is really one in organization, spirit, and doctrine. One thing is certain—the present status of the Christian Church is not ideal. It is divided at present into hundreds of branches, to which all sorts of names are applied. The Christians of the English-speaking world most lamentably are divided. Most Christian people will agree that sectarianism is far from the ideal; that denominational divisions are a serious handicap in the process of evangelizing the world. George

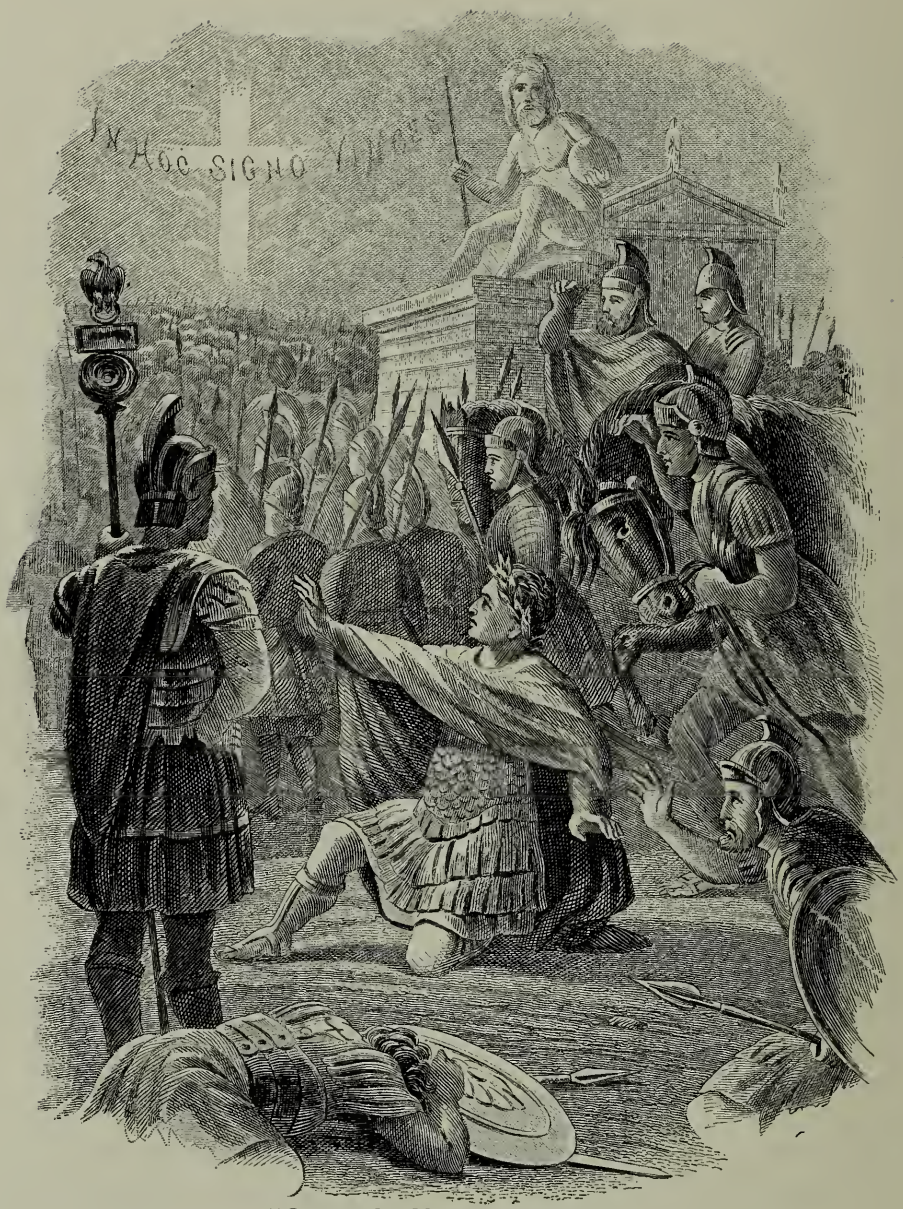
Macdonald declares that "division has done more to hide Christ from the view of men than all the infidelity that has ever been spoken."

I am familiar with the arguments used in defense of the present denominational divisions. We are told that such divisions are providential; that they have been historically to the advantage of the church and the spread of the gospel; that by competition and rivalry activity is stimulated and more work accomplished; that each denomination has a mission to defend or some particular work or truth to propagate. Such are some of the leading arguments employed. But even if we admit that there is some truth in these arguments, we at the same time concede that a divided church is not an ideal church, not the type of church which Christ prayed for. It would seem that so long as human folks are constituted as they are, organic unity will be impossible. It is highly improbable that the Christian Church will ever attain such unity under existing conditions.

While complete organic and doctrinal unity seems to be reserved for the millennium, it is decidedly encouraging to note the tendencies toward spiritual unity in these days. The different branches of the Christian Church are

coming to understand each other better. Our interest in each other is becoming less superficial and more real. We are less prone to censure those who say "Sibboleth" instead of "Shibboleth." In spite of differences in polity and doctrine, we are beginning to see that we are working for the same great object, namely, the bringing of a lost world to Christ. There have been some delightful instances of organic union in recent years of the branches of the same general denomination. One of the most encouraging signs of the present day is the growing spirit of real spiritual unity in the Christian Church.

A man who made a balloon ascension said that as he arose the roads, walls, and fences that divided the land into sections and farms gradually faded out, until only one continuous, beautiful view of valley and hill, river and forest, spread out in exquisite loveliness below him. It is even so in our view of the Christian Church as our love for God deepens and our outlook and our sympathies broaden. The barriers that divide our Father's earthly church into ecclesiastical farms fade out, and we come to have a vision of one great, cosmopolitan and conquering Christian Church. We have but one Christ, one cross, one Bible, and



"Onward, Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war."

one great commission—thank God for that! Let us rejoice that we are living in these days when spiritual unity among the churches is growing apace. Let us magnify the common essentials; let us keep step with the other regiments in the Christian army; let us have a real love for and interest in each other; let us get such a vision of the great mission of the church that we will forget our differences in our efforts to fulfill that mission; let us all point steadfastly to the cross as our symbol of unity; let us live to make our own church a real power in the world, but let us live to pray for and work with every other church which exalts our Lord.

Head of thy church beneath,
  The catholic, the true,
On all her members breathe,
  Her broken frame renew;
Then shall thy perfect will be done,
When Christians love and live as one.

As we continue our study of this militant hymn we see clearly suggested the great truth that the ideal church is an optimistic church. This is one of the most optimistic hymns ever written. There is not a single pessimistic line in it. It is unnecessary to quote any part of

the hymn to prove these assertions because the whole illustrates the truth suggested. Not only are the words optimistic, but the tune is equally so. The music is charged with the spirit of hope and triumph.

There are many timid folk in these days who believe that the Church of Christ has come upon evil times and that Christianity is becoming decadent. But such fears are merely fanciful and not real. The church is not losing its grip on this world. Christianity is by no means decadent. Christ is not being supplanted in the thoughts and affections of mankind. Never since Christ planted his church has the Christian religion held so many people in its saving embrace as at the present time. Never has the influence of the cross been so far-reaching as now. So let us catch the spirit of the author of this hymn and view the church through optimistic eyes.

Dr. Johnston Myers well says: "The best institution in the world is the church. Our civilization without the church and its allied organizations would be like the day without the sun. We can trace almost every blessing which we enjoy as American people directly to the influence of the church." .Such is the grandeur of the history of the church, such is

her glorious position in the world to-day, such should be our view of her coming conquests. As members of the militant church we should be optimistic in our conception of the moral world. Alas! there are some good people—Christian pessimists—who believe that this world is headed hopelessly in the wrong direction. They believe that moral reforms are moving so slowly that they will never amount to anything; that all the good which we seek to do is counteracted by a preponderance of evil. They never seem to see the bright and promising features in the intellectual, moral, and spiritual redemption of the world.

True, sin in every conceivable form is in the world. Let us admit the awful fact of sin and recognize its terrible ravages in human society. But let us remember that God is still in this world; that the Holy Spirit is still in the world; that Christ is still in the world; that

> Warm, sweet, tender, even yet
> A present help is he;
> And faith has still its Olivet,
> And love its Galilee.
>
> The healing of the seamless dress
> Is [still] by our beds of pain;
> We [still] touch him in life's throng and press,
> And we are whole again;

that truth is still in the world; that fearless and heroic champions of the right are still in the world; that mighty social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual agencies—yea, mightier than ever before—are still in the world; that the Holy Bible is still in the world; that "like a mighty army moves the Church of God"—still in the world. It was such a splendid and optimistic conception of the moral world that led Faber to write:

> Workman of God! O lose not heart,
> But learn what God is like;
> And in the darkest battlefield
> Thou shalt know where to strike.
>
> Thrice blest is he to whom is given
> The instinct that can tell
> That God is on the field, when he
> Is most invisible.

Let us press this thought a little farther. An ideal church is a church that is optimistic in the face of difficulties and serious tasks. The church in every age has had great difficulties to overcome and hard problems to solve. The twentieth-century church has its problems and difficulties. It is not necessary for us to enumerate these problems and difficulties, but it is necessary that we should meet them in an

optimistic spirit. The adverse things of life when met in an optimistic spirit give sinew and tone to character. Multitudes of people fail in their undertakings because they think they are going to fail. Many churches fail to accomplish anything because the members have the pessimistic view of every problem presented. The reason why the Church of Christ is so strong, so virile, is because she has overcome so many stupendous difficulties and solved so many hard problems. Margaret Sangster suggests what the attitude of the individual Christian should be toward the adverse things of life, as follows:

> We must march when the music cheers us,
> March when the strains are dumb,
> Plucky and valiant, forward, march!
> And smile whatever may come.
> For, whether life's hard or easy,
> The strong man keeps the pace,
> For the desolate march and the silent
> The strong soul finds the grace.

During a hard-fought battle between the French and the Austrians, an officer rushed into the presence of the French commander and exclaimed: "The battle is lost! The battle is lost!" But the General quietly replied, "Yes, one battle is lost, but there is time to

win another." Inspired by his optimism the officers led the troops to the conflict once more and snatched victory out of the jaws of defeat. The Church of Christ has suffered some reverses and lost some battles, but this should not discourage the soldiers in God's militant army. The future is full of promise. Great battles are to be fought by the twentieth-century church and great victories will be won. Let us do well our part in this great warfare. Let us catch the spirit which led Baring-Gould to declare that the "Church of Jesus constant will remain," and that led him to sound the battlecry: "On, then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!"

The day dawns! Soon the light
Shall flood the darkened world with radiance bright;
On the horizon rests the mighty Sun,
His course across the heavens just begun;
Yet standing on the dim edge of the world
His flaming challenge to the night is hurled,
And soon along humanity's glad way
Will flash the wondrous splendor of the day—
The day dawns!

Finally, this stirring hymn suggests that the ideal church is a conquering church. The whole hymn is vibrant with the conquering spirit:

Onward, Christian soldiers! Marching as to war.

Forward into battle, see, His banners go!

Gates of hell can never 'gainst that church prevail.

Like a mighty army moves the church of God.

Such are the conquering sentiments of this hymn. It is a splendid challenge to the church to conquer this world for Jesus Christ. This is just what Christ expected his church to do when he announced her great commission. This was Paul's consuming passion, which led him to exclaim: "War a good warfare," "Fight the good fight of faith," "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." I have seen a little church paper which has the following motto: "To defeat the devil politically, socially, and ecclesiastically." This is a strong way of expressing what the precise mission of the church is. And if the church should ever prove false to her sacred mission an unseen hand will write above her altars, "Ichabod"—"Where is the glory?"

The Rev. Herbert A. Jump states this truth in the following striking manner: "The church has no right to content itself with staid respectability. When a church cares more for respectability than for humble service; when it

is prouder of its organ and its brownstone front than it is of the poor people who seek its pews for worship; when it regards itself as a polite religious club with its clergyman an errand boy to do its bidding rather than a regiment marching into battle with its minister leading the charge, then its days are numbered and the Lord will sooner or later cast out that church as an unprofitable servant."

A converted anarchist testified as follows in a prayer meeting: "Once my creed was this: 'Down with everything that is up,' but it has changed, and now I say, 'Up with everything that is down.'" This is the working creed of the militant church of Christ, "Up with everything that is down." The true business of the church is not to formulate beautiful theories and creeds, but to perform Christlike deeds; not merely to pity men, but to lift them to a plane of life which will make them independent of pity; not merely to tell folk to live better, but to lead them to a living Saviour; not merely to urge people to unite with the church, but to become spiritual members of the kingdom of God; not merely to preach a religion to help mortals to prepare to die, but a religion to help them to live righteously, happily, and usefully here and now.

Each member of the militant church must feel an individual responsibility in fulfilling the exalted mission of the church. This is a work which cannot be relegated to others, a service which cannot be accomplished by proxy. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe once made an earnest appeal to an eminent statesman in behalf of a man who was suffering a great injustice. He replied: "I am so much taken up with plans for the benefit of the race that I have no time for individuals." Mrs. Howe's terse comment was: "When last heard from, our Maker had not reached this altitude." This is a telling illustration of a great truth. This world must be saved by the individual Christian's seeking the individual man and leading him to Christ. This was Christ's method, and after the passing of nineteen centuries no better method has ever been discovered. Christ's demand is that his follower shall consecrate his thought, his talent, his affection, and a reasonable portion of his time to the fulfilling of the great commission. This is your supreme work, O disciple of Christ. This is God's master plan for your life. This is the summons of his church. This is the greatest need of twentieth-century Christianity.

The saintly Dr. Daniel Steele sends the fol-

lowing stirring challenge to the church: "Cease living on the heroism of the fathers, quit glorying in numbers, sacrificing to statistics, and burning incense to the general minutes. Down upon your knees, and seek and find for yourself the secret of the power of the fathers—a clean heart and the endowment of power from on high. Then arise and unfurl the banner of salvation full and free. Then in double-quick time, charge upon the hosts of sin and conquer the world for Christ." This aggressive message from the pen of this great leader in the church contains a battle cry which should be taken up by every soldier in the militant army of God.

Raise on high the banner of Christian conquest. Marshal every soldier to its support. Clothe every warrior with all the armor of God. Let every heart and arm be nerved with divine strength for the conflict. Let every ear be attentive to the divine command. Hark, our Master speaks! The command rings out loud and clear: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This is the supreme mandate to the twentieth-century church. Obey, O militant church of the living God! March to the conquest! March to the victory!

Onward, then, ye people!
Join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices
In the triumph song;
Glory, laud, and honor
Unto Christ the King,
This through countless ages
Men and angels sing.

CHAPTER XII

ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME!

ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME!

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
  Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
  And crown him Lord of all.

Crown him, ye morning stars of light,
  Who fixed this earthly ball;
Now hail the strength of Israel's might,
  And crown him Lord of all.

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
  Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail him who saves you by his grace,
  And crown him Lord of all.

Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
  The wormwood and the gall;
Go, spread your trophies at his feet,
  And crown him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tribe,
  On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
  And crown him Lord of all.

O that with yonder sacred throng
  We at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
  And crown him Lord of all.

—Edward Perronet, alt.

CHAPTER XII

ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME!

The sainted Theodore Cuyler said of this hymn, "It always stirs me like the sound of a trumpet." It was a special favorite of D. L. Moody's, and he frequently opened his great meetings by having all the people sing it. Dr. Duffield, the hymnologist, declares that "it has become the English Te Deum, sharing with Bishop Ken's Doxology the spontaneous approval of all Christian hearts." Bishop Foss, referring to this hymn and its author, exclaimed, "Perronet, bird of a single song, but O how sweet!"

This hymn was written by the Rev. Edward Perronet, who was born at Shoreham, England, August 2, 1721. He was the son of the Rev. Vincent Perronet, vicar of the Established Church at Shoreham. Edward was a close friend of Charles Wesley, and broke away from the Established Church to become his traveling companion. Later he became pastor of one of Lady Huntingdon's chapels

in Canterbury. Like Mrs. Sarah Adams, author of "Nearer, My God, to Thee," Perronet wrote many hymns, but, like Mrs. Adams, Perronet wrote only one great hymn. It has been well said concerning this hymn, "That one hymn was enough; the man did not live in vain who taught Christ's church her grandest coronation hymn in honor of her King." This hymn was composed in 1779 and published in 1780 in The Gospel Magazine. As originally published by Perronet it had eight stanzas. Several changes have been made in the hymn since it was first published, the principal change being in the last stanza, written by Perronet as follows:

Let every tribe and every tongue
That bound creation's call,
Now shout in universal song,
The crownèd Lord of all.

Perronet died January 2, 1792. His last words were a pean of victory:

"Glory to God in the height of his divinity!
Glory to God in the depth of his humanity!
Glory to God in his all-sufficiency!
Into his hand I commend my spirit."

The British Wesleyans usually sing this hymn to the tune of "Miles Lane," but in America

it is nearly always sung to the tune of "Coronation," composed by Oliver Holden, an American carpenter. This soul-stirring tune will carry Holden's name to all future generations.

In this truly great hymn Perronet presents us three great conceptions of Christ. These conceptions are as lofty and beautiful as they are helpful and inspiring.

First of all, he portrays Christ as man's Redeemer. The following lines of the hymn suggest this thought unmistakably:

> Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
> The wormwood and the gall.
> Ye ransomed from the fall,
> Hail him who saves you by his grace.

These lines clearly bring out the love, the sufferings, and the saving grace of the Redeemer of the world. Perronet thus founds his hymn on the greatest conception in the Christian religion. The angel's message to Joseph was, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Thus the angel sounded the keynote of the entire story of man's redemption.

The president of an old and famous college once said: "The principal thing in this world is

a fact. The principal fact is a person. The principal person is Jesus Christ." And I may add that the principal mission in the world of this principal person is to redeem the world. Well has Moody said, "If there is one word above another that will swing open the eternal gates, it is the name of Jesus." In an interview soon after his return from India, Bishop McDowell said: "I am convinced of India's absolute need of Christianity and the utter inability of her own religions to bring her people redemption or new life. Over and over one keeps saying, 'There is no other name.' The pervasive influence of Christianity has gone through all strata, the hard strata of Indian life, until the whole life has already been affected by it." It was the tremendous redemptive influence of Jesus of Nazareth in this old world which led the distinguished historian Lecky to write, "The simple record of three short years of Christ's active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists."

When God evolved the stupendous plan of salvation he did not send an angel or an archangel to fulfill his plan. He came himself in the person of Jesus Christ. S. D. Gordon

states this truth in the following apt words: "While men do many things by proxy, the matter of wooing and winning us men was a thing that lay too close to the heart of God to be intrusted to anybody else. He came himself down among men and, taking them by the hand in closest touch, leads the way out and up to the old Eden level of life." The imperial position of Christianity among the religions of the world consists in the glorious fact that it contains a Redeemer. The Oriental religions contain beautiful literature, some helpful doctrines, much ethical truth, and many abstract precepts of more or less worth. But towering above all these systems stands Christianity, containing the one called Jesus who "shall save his people from their sins." The reason why Christianity has achieved such signal conquests in the world, why sinful folks everywhere have accepted it, why it stands supreme to-day among the world's religions, is because it offers to the world one who is able to save unto the uttermost all who come to him.

There is a striking incident concerning this hymn, which indicates Christ's unique position as man's Redeemer. The Rev. E. P. Scott was a missionary in India. One day he saw

on the street a very strange-looking heathen. By inquiry, he learned that he was a member of one of the inland tribes that lived far away in the mountain districts, and that they came down once a year to trade. He also discovered that the gospel had never been preached to them, and that it was exceedingly dangerous to venture among them because of their murderous propensities. His heart was moved with compassion for these tribes and he longed to break unto them the bread of life. Going into his room, he fell on his knees and pleaded for divine direction. Believing that God would have him go, he packed his valise, took his violin, and started for the mountains. As he bade his friends farewell, they said: "We shall never see you again. It is madness for you to go." After a journey of several days suddenly he was surrounded one day by a crowd of these savages. Scores of spears were aimed at his heart and he expected that every moment would be his last. Breathing a prayer for aid, he drew forth his violin and, with closed eyes, played and sang, "All hail the power of Jesus' name." Being afraid to open his eyes, he sang on until he reached the last verse. Then, as he sang, "Let every kindred, every tribe," he opened his eyes and saw that

the spears were lowered and many of the savages were moved to tears. Scott remained with them for two and a half years telling the sweet story of Redemption. He had the blessed privilege of leading many of them to Jesus, the Redeemer. When he was compelled to leave them because of ill health, they besought him, saying, "O, Missionary, come back to us again!" After a rest in America he went back among them and passed to his coronation from their midst.

This beautiful incident brings to us the overwhelming power of Jesus' name and leads us to exclaim with Perronet, "All hail the power of Jesus' name!" Supposing Mr. Scott had gone to these tribes with a message of "salvation by character," or by the acceptance of some ethical system, or by conforming their lives to certain rules, he would have failed utterly in reaching the hearts and consciences of these poor, degraded heathen. What they needed was a powerful Redeemer, and this was the burden of Scott's message. The heralds of the cross on a thousand mission fields have stood in the midst of ignorance, superstition, despair, and impotent heathenism, and have exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" The most

thrilling tidings which ever came to this weary, sinful world were the tidings of redemption brought by the angels: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." The best tidings of the nineteenth century were the tidings of multitudes in heathen lands seeking Jesus, the Christ of the world.

Gipsy Smith tells of a woman who introduced herself to him at the close of one of his services. She confessed she had been trying to find peace with God for ten years. She said she had traveled from the Atlantic to the Pacific, had heard the best preachers and evangelists in America, had read many books, and had attended many meetings—all this in the hope of finding spiritual rest and peace. This eminent evangelist looked her in the eye and said: "You have made a mistake. Go straight to Jesus. It is not us you want. What you want is an interview with Jesus, and you are looking for men and words and 'isms.' It is Christ you want, woman, and five minutes' interview with the Son of God will end all your misery. It is Jesus you need." And Gipsy Smith was right. What perishing humanity needs is not beautiful theories, abstract precepts, ethical systems, elaborate

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!"

creeds and good examples. Humanity needs Jesus. He alone can save man. He alone can say, "Son, daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee." He alone can redeem man and bring him into sweet fellowship with the Father. He alone can bring a message of peace to the troubled, broken, and sin-sick heart.

With Perronet, let us "All hail the power of Jesus' name." All hail Jesus as the world's redeemer! All hail Jesus as the perfect Saviour! All hail Jesus as the one bright hope of sinning humanity! All hail Jesus as the only refuge of the lost everywhere! All hail Jesus as the crucified Jesus, who now helps man to crucify every unholy passion and bring his entire life into harmony with God's laws! All hail! All hail! All hail!

Again, in this great hymn Perronet conceives of Christ as man's supreme Master. This is recognized at once in the closing line of every stanza, "And crown him Lord of all." The word "Lord" means "master" or "ruler." Bearing this in mind, listen to the declaration of Peter: "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Then listen to Paul: "We preach Christ Jesus as Lord." Then listen to Christ

himself: "Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Such is the conception that Perronet had when he wrote this immortal hymn.

A select company, including Charles Lamb, were debating what they would do if certain famous men who had died should suddenly appear before them. One told how he would greet Homer, another how he would greet Shakespeare. Then some one asked, "But suppose Jesus Christ came in?" Instantly Lamb became very serious and answered: "That, you see, would be different. If Shakespeare came in, we would all rise; but if Christ came in, we would all kneel." The verdict of Lamb has been that of the civilized world for centuries.

Dr. Zeller, director of the statistical bureau in Stuttgart, has made a painstaking estimate of the religious sects of the world. He estimates that there are 534,940,000 Christians in the world. This is more than one third of the population of the globe. In other words, out of every 1,000 of the earth's inhabitants, 346 bow the knee to Christ and freely acknowledge him as their supreme Master. And every day new subjects are accepting him as Lord, and

the Christian Church is praying and working in order to see that day dawn when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess "that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." One writer has put this thought vividly: "This is the most majestic era in the progress of the mastery of Christ. And to-morrow will be greater than to-day. The signs of his supremacy are everywhere. The tide which bears the world onward and upward is the mastery of Christ."

Let me note that Christ has vindicated his right to be the world's Master. In Iole's description of Hercules there occurs the following dialogue:

"Oh, Iole, how did you know that Hercules was a god?"

"Because," answered Iole, "I was content the moment my eyes rested upon him. When I beheld Theseus, I desired that I might see him offer battle, or at least guide his horse in a chariot race; but Hercules did not wait for a contest; he conquered whether he stood, or walked, or sat, or whatever he did!"

This classical myth typifies what Christ actually did. He conquered "whatever he did." His whole earthly career was characterized by a mastery of everything which he

touched. He mastered the doctors when only a boy; he mastered the howling winds and the turbulent sea; he mastered disease in every form; he mastered the spirits of the departed and granted them a longer life in this present world; he mastered the multitudes as he spake to them "as man never spake"; he mastered all classes of men in a marvelous manner; he thoroughly mastered himself in the awful scenes enacted at Gethsemane and Calvary; he mastered the sealed tomb and walked forth the world's mightiest conqueror. Not only during his ministry was he a Master, but he has been the world's greatest Master ever since. Ah, how wondrously he still masters men!

Some one remarked to Wendell Phillips one day that Christ was amiable but not strong. Phillips at once said: "Not strong! Test the strength of Jesus by the strength of the men whom he mastered. He mastered Saul of Tarsus, and the mastery empowered him, for while yet a man of a few cubits in stature, he towered above his contemporaries, and while scarcely a man in height, he walked amid men with such mighty strides that he shook the throne of the imperial Cæsars!" Not only has he mastered men in the progress of the ages, but he has mastered laws, usages, institutions,

wealth, customs, and art. All these things have felt the vital touch of his master hand.

Not only is Christ the supreme Master, but he enables every man to become a thorough master of himself. Christ makes man master appetite, lust, unholy ambitions, unlawful desires, and everything else which in the slightest degree interferes with God's perfected image in man. "He frees the understanding from the most fatal of errors. He opens our eyes that we may see, strikes from the soul the fetters of sense, cleanses our wings from the clogging birdlime of earthliness, and for the first time we are free, gloriously free like the eagle, ringed round with the azure sky!"

In that magnificent structure the Cologne Cathedral there is a rude image of oak which represents a giant with a child upon his shoulder. This giant's name was Offero, the man in search of a master. Offero would serve only the most powerful master. He offered his services to the greatest of earthly kings and served him well until he ascertained that the prince of darkness was mightier than the king. So he entered the service of Satan and served him faithfully. But one day while they were traveling on the highway, they came to

the crossroads, where stood a crucifix. There Satan fell trembling and refused to pass on. "Why art thou afraid?" asked Offero. "Because this is the Christ, who rules in heaven and suffered on the cross for men, and he is mightier than I." So Offero took Christ for his Master and never had to change masters again, for he had found Him who is Lord over all.

How broadly and how intensely stimulating this story is! How it brings to us the words of Jesus, "One is your Master, even Christ." Place the emphasis here on the word "one." There is only one real Master in the world and that Master is Christ. Hear this, O man, trying to master your life by imitating good examples, by following human leadership, by conforming to some ethical system, by good resolutions, by reading good literature, and by forming good habits. All these things combined will not lead you to man's greatest goal—complete self-mastery. But Christ will lead you to this goal if you accept him unreservedly as your Master.

How marvelously Christ masters men! In one of the battles of the Civil War defeat seemed to stare the Federal troops in the very face. The men were foot-weary and exhausted

as they confronted the foe. Suddenly a soldier boy began to sing Perronet's old hymn, "All hail the power of Jesus' name." Others joined and it soon flew up and down that extended column until the whole army was inspired by the hymn. The boys sped heroically on "as if charged by a thousand galvanic batteries," and at midnight the enemy had fled. On ten thousand battlefields of earth where human folk are battling with adverse conditions, with stern and relentless enemies, man's perfect Master inspires him just as truly as old "Coronation" inspired those weary troops to fight so gallantly.

All hail Christ as the world's supreme Master! All hail Christ as the only Master who is able to help man completely to master himself! All hail Christ while we "crown him Lord of all"! Let us sing with our beloved Whittier:

> O Lord and Master of us all,
> Whate'er our name or sign,
> We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
> We test our lives by thine.

Finally, Perronet conceives of Christ as the King of kings, and beautifully writes this in the fourth and fifth stanzas:

Let every kindred, every tribe
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all.

O that, with yonder sacred throng,
We at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown him Lord of all.

In thought and in spirit, Perronet was swept through the beautiful gates of the heavenly city, saw the King of kings exalted on the throne of the universe, and heard the sweet song of the angels and the redeemed saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." He looked forward with ecstasy to the moment when he would join "yonder sacred throng" and fall at the feet of his King, and "join the everlasting song," and "crown him Lord of all." What a glorious conception is this! Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords! Jesus Christ, supreme on earth, supreme in heaven! The Christian Church has not emphasized this conception of Christ sufficiently. We have emphasized Christ as Redeemer and Master, but we rarely think of

that great day when we shall fall at his feet and crown him as our King.

A writer has said well: "There are greater days coming for the Son of man. The wreath of universal empire is yet to rest upon the brow that was once crowned with thorns. The cross that threw so black a shadow over Golgotha will yet fill the world with its radiance." Dr. MacArthur represents Christ's supreme position as follows: "Jesus Christ is the pearl and crown of humanity; he is the loftiest specimen of manhood the race has produced; he is the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of his substance. He rises in unapproachable glory, not only above men, but also above saints and seraphs, and above angels and archangels. Gazing upon him, we can exclaim with inexpressible enthusiasm and unutterable ecstasy 'Ecce Homo!' and, with the same breath, and with equal truth, we can also reverently exclaim, 'Ecce Deus!' "

In the heart of the Rockies I beheld many peaks which excited my interest and admiration. Yonder in the distance, capped with a crown of snowy whiteness, stood the Spanish Peaks. Yonder I beheld Cheyenne Mountain, then Kings Mountain, then the Crystal Range, as they lifted their heads up and up as if to

kiss the blue sky bending over them. But in the midst of all these natural wonders, towering above them all in grandeur and might, stood snow-capped, sun-crowned, hoary-headed, and inspiring Pike's Peak. In like manner, Jesus Christ stands above all the illustrious sons of men and all the hosts of heaven. There he stands in matchless purity, in spotless beauty, in majestic sweetness, in massive strength, in unapproachable splendor, and in supreme kingly power.

Many years ago a Methodist local preacher named William Dawson was preaching in London on the divine offices of Christ. He was only a plain farmer, yet his vivid imagination and wonderful command of language enabled him to sway the largest audiences. He had portrayed the Saviour as teacher and priest and now he proceeded to picture him as King of kings. He drew a graphic picture of a coronation. The immense procession was marshaled, and moved toward the white throne to crown Christ as King. So vividly did he draw the picture that the congregation was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement. Suddenly the speaker paused, lifted up his voice and sang, "All hail the power of Jesus' name." The effect was startling. The crowd

sprang to their feet and sang the entire hymn with a feeling and a power which seemed to swell higher with each successive line. This incident I regard as typical of what we shall witness when, before the great white throne, we shall join "yonder sacred throng" as they sing the conquests of our King, and I should be disappointed in not hearing old "Coronation."

I once heard the "Hallelujah Chorus" sung by five hundred trained voices. This chorus was written by Handel after he was stricken with blindness in 1751. He claimed that he had a vision and that this chorus is that vision set to music. Nor do I doubt for an instant Handel's claim. Neither would you if your soul, like mine, was lifted from the sordid earth to the paradise above by those hundreds of sweet voices. This masterpiece of Handel's is a magnificent expression of two thoughts, namely, the universality and the permanency of the reign of the King of kings.

Somewhere about the middle of the chorus the bass voices sang the glorious refrain, "And he shall reign for ever and ever." Then the tenor voices added, "And he shall reign for ever and ever." Then the alto voices followed with, "And he shall reign for ever and ever." Then,

highest and sweetest of all, the soprano voices added, "And he shall reign for ever and ever." Then bass, tenor, alto, and soprano all united, and in a burst of melody which seemed to be paradisaical in its origin, swept my soul upward and onward until I seemed to be attuned in spirit with music celestial. O how wondrously those voices blended as they poured forth the sweetest, the noblest, the grandest of all refrains, "And he shall reign for ever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords! Hallelujah, hallelujah!" I frankly confess that my soul was stirred profoundly, my mind was quickened spiritually and my imagination carried me beyond things earthly, beyond the stars, into the very midst of the paradise of God. I saw a great chorus which no man could number assembled before the shining white throne. Most intently did I listen to the song which they sang. It was a song of triumph to the King of kings, telling of his wondrous achievements and of the universality and permanency of his reign. In the midst of their song I heard the voices of the patriarchs peal forth, "For he shall reign for ever and ever." Then I heard the voices of the prophets add, "For he shall reign for ever and ever." Then the voices of the apostles and church fathers

followed, "For he shall reign for ever and ever." Then the voices of the martyrs triumphantly sang, "For he shall reign for ever and ever." Then the voices of the reformers were wafted to my ears, "For he shall reign for ever and ever." Then the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, church fathers, martyrs, reformers, the one hundred and forty-four thousand together with the angels of God and all the redeemed of the ages, joined in one grand chorus, and my spirit was lifted to bliss supernal, to ecstasy supreme, as they pealed forth the blessed, the glorious, the triumphant strain, "For he shall reign for ever and ever, King of kings! and Lord of Lords! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"